


THE ROMAN EAGLES

H.C. BAILEY



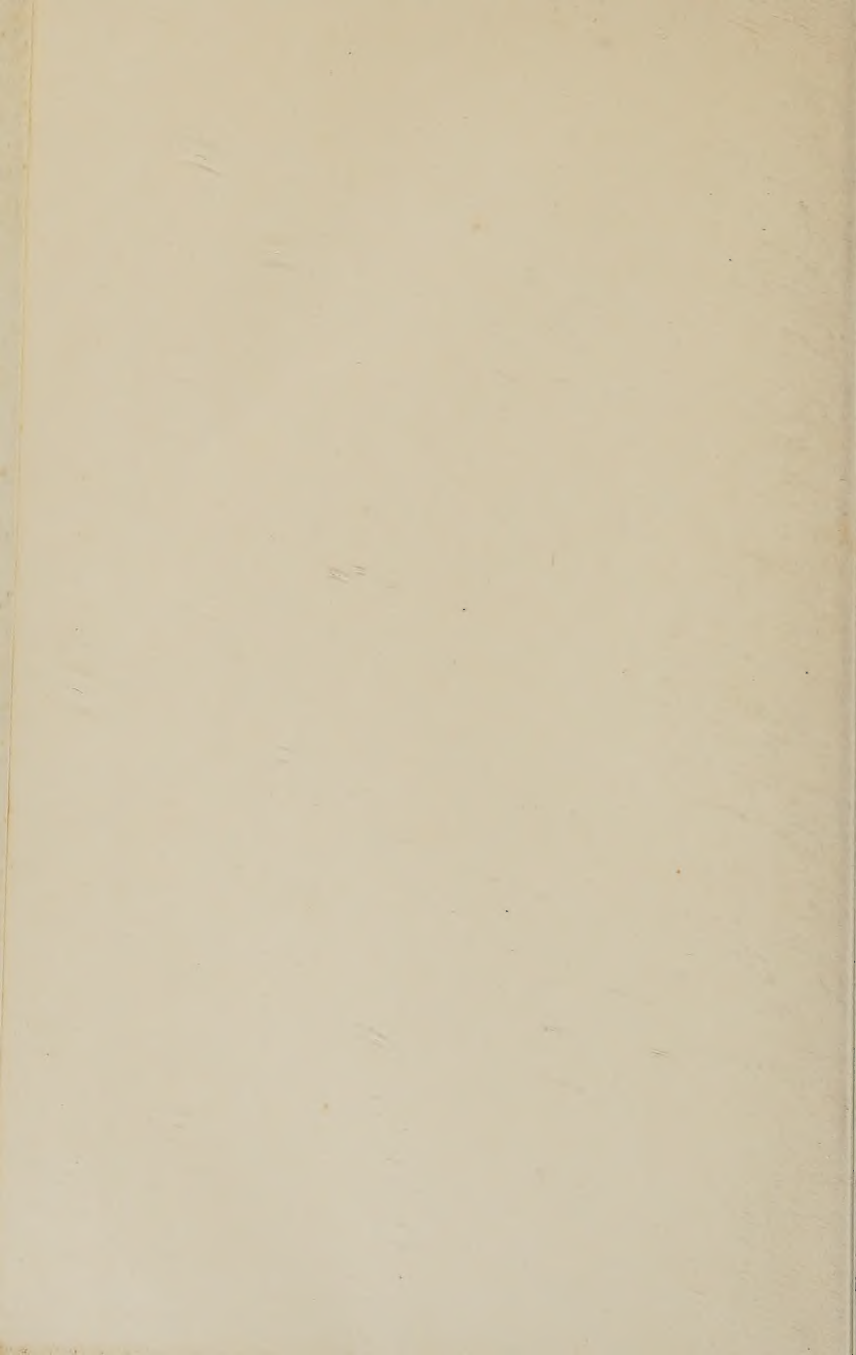
KU-426-933





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_KU-426-933

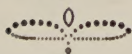


The
Roman Eagles.

The
Roman Eagles

BY
H. C. BAILEY.

*Author of "My Lady of Orange," "Colonel Stowe,"
"Beaujeu," etc.*



GEORGE GILL & SONS, LTD.
Minerva House, Paternoster Square, E.C. 4.



Printed in England, July, 1929.

PREFACE.

BY H. C. BAILEY.

This little book is a story about a boy and girl, written for girls and boys. I hope it may be something else too, but that is what matters most. It is a tale of adventures in England two thousand years ago, when the adventures available to boys and girls were more tremendous than at the moment. Though there is so wide a gulf of time between us and the people in the book, perhaps they may be found not vague and dreary "Ancient Britons" but rather like our own friends. The greatest of all historians said that the value of history was as a guide to the probabilities of the present and the future. We might add now that it should be an aid to the understanding of life and the importance of men and movements. My little book is a romance, but it will be found also true history. What England was like before it came under the Roman rule is written here. Perhaps something useful may be learnt by the young citizens of 1929 from an action picture of life when the British people were "cut off from the whole world" and making a wayward struggle against the civilising power of an Empire. Perhaps they may be tempted to recall in the town and country they know best the desperate endeavours and endurance, the passionate hopes and loyalties, which were spent to make England safe, comfortable and happy for them. Perhaps there may be some corrective to the conventional notions of progress, patriotism, civilisation, liberty. Perhaps the old ideals of loyalty and honour, of duty and mercy, may be enforced. Perhaps some who read it may be tempted to think.

H. C. B.

FOREWORD.

The history-teacher, nowadays, does his best to rescue his subject from formalism. He succeeds when he finds something in the past which he can relate to the child's own experience : when he presents to the child's imagination the great figures of history, not as puppets stuffed with sawdust but as creatures of flesh and blood. Story is History's ally. The story-teller who knows his business places his characters in scenes which the child himself knows. History, like Charity, begins at home. There is no county in England which has not its fund of material for stories. Kent, the land lying nearest to the continent, is richest of them all in living memorials of the past. We, in the twentieth century, can echo Drayton's song :

*" When as the pliant Muse, straight turning her about,
And comming to the Land as Medway goeth out,
Saluting the deare soyle, ô famous Kent, quoth shee,
What country hath this Ile that can compare with thee ! "*

The tale of the first Roman invasions must rouse the interest of any child ; but, to the child of Kent who has walked the street of Durovernum or has scrambled below the cliffs of Dubris, these things appeal with a special intimacy—" *viva adhuc et desiderio pulciora.*"

E. SALTER DAVIES.

The Roman Eagles.

CHAPTER I.

A QUEEN IN KENT.

FIFTY years before Christ was born a girl walked up to the downs above Maidstone. You can find the way she went by the great stones, which have been called "Kit's Coty House" longer than anyone can tell. But when Brigit stood before them and bent her head and asked a blessing, the stones were buried deep under a mound of earth. That mound was old already when the first men of her clan came to the pleasant land of Kent. The little dark people of whom they made slaves taught them that it was the tomb of a god who had been a man for a while and their king till he was angry with them and went back to his heaven in the western sea.

Malorix the Druid, who knew all things, said that he who lay buried there and had not died was the great dread god Toutates, who gave victory in war if his favour were won. So the ring of tall stones which stood then about the mound was his temple. Before the clan took arms, some one of them, girl or boy, must be killed there that Malorix might tell, by the way the blood flowed from the body, how the fight would go. When the war was over they must weave a great basket of wicker in the shape of a giant man and put in it men and women, whom Malorix might choose, and burn them alive there to pacify Toutates. Of such a god a girl must pray a blessing.

Brigit had need of the favour of the god of war. Though her mother was a queen, there were four kings in Kent besides and each ready enough to take the rich lands by the Medway which Queen Cartismandua ruled. Beyond the Thames was a greater king, Cassivellaunus, who had already killed the king of the corn lands we call Essex, who

was threatening to eat up all the kings of Kent, who, as folks whispered, dreamed a dream of making himself the only King of England. The fighting men of the clan jeered at this wild fancy, but Brigit saw her mother's eyes troubled and Malorix the Druid talked strangely of seeing mists of blood.

Over the crest of the downs a chariot came. Two horses, no bigger than our ponies, drew it, it was like a low cart without seats, but the axles were bright with bronze and on the ponies a hundred bronze ornaments jingled and flashed. In the chariot three men rode and as Brigit turned to look, one of them flung up his hand and called her name and ran to her.

She stood waiting, a tall, slight girl with two long plaits of hair golden in the sunlight which glowed upon the blue and green tartan of her cloak. That was wound close about her, held by a clasp of gold and pearls on her right shoulder, leaving arms and legs bare.

The lad who came smiling and grasped her hands was the son of King Segonax of

Durovernum, which we call Canterbury. "Look, Brigit, I come in my war chariot," he cried.

She did look. "A pretty thing, boy," she said. He was as slight as she and not much older. "Do they let you play with it?"

He did not like being called boy. He plucked the first sprouts of a moustache. "I train my horses till I come to carry you off, girl. You would make a noble slave, Brigit."

"I would die first, Cunoval," she looked in his eyes.

The chariot had stopped. "Well said, princess," one of the men cried, a short, sturdy fellow whose black hair curled close about his head.

She looked at him like a queen's daughter. "Who speaks to me?" she said proudly.

The other man, Cunoval's uncle, brother of King Segonax, made answer for him. "It is a Gaul who has fled from the Romans, Lady Brigit, Brannus his name."

“ If he comes helpless, he shall have help.” Brigit said. “ Carry him to my mother, my lord Lugotorix.”

“ So may your gods help you,” the man cried and Lugotorix drove the ponies on.

Cunoval put his arm round Brigit, but she held herself away from him. “ What, I am not wanted ? ” he said angrily. “ Why are you sour to-day, Brigit ? ”

“ Why do you come talking of war ? ”

“ Are you afraid ? ” he laughed and kissed her.

“ Ah ! let me be. Afraid ? Not of you. You do not frighten me when you threaten. But you make me hate you. Why do you brag of your war chariot ? You will never have me by war, Prince Cunoval.”

“ By war or by peace you are to be mine. Be sure of that.”

She started away from him. “ Did you come to claim me by a threat of war ? Is that why you brought Lugotorix ? ”

“ No, no, no. You take this all wrong, you are so fierce. There is no thought of

war between my people and your people, nor ever shall be, please the gods. But a great war is upon us, Brigit. The Romans are coming."

"They have been coming every year this long while, boy."

"They are coming now. My father is sure of it. This Gaul, Brannus, he says that Cæsar has gathered an army across the Straits at Portus Itius. Two days ago our folk at Dubris saw a Roman war ship sail close along the coast spying out the land. The eagles will swoop on Britain soon."

She looked at him. She fingered the brooch of a golden boar's head that bound his dark tartan cloak.

"Then the boars shall trample them down," she said.

Cunoval laughed and tossed back his red hair and shouted a war cry.

They ran together to the village—it is Aylesford now—which was the capital of the realm of Queen Cartismandua.

Some of the men of her clan watched over little dark slaves at work among the cornfields. The sickles were cutting the last of the wheat. A cloud of chaff rose over the threshing floor from the thudding flails and already slaves were carrying away bags of grain to store in the pits dug out of the dry chalk of the hillside.

A stockade of strong posts with boughs woven between made a wall of giant basket-work round the village. The houses stood close within, like a cluster of beehives, all alike built of stones for some feet, then of sticks bent over and interlaced to shape a curving roof covered with clay and rushes. The swarthy slave women went to and fro with faggots and pitchers of water. Here and there the men of the clan, white bodies naked but for their short breeches, wrought at iron weapons or bronze and their tall fair women sat by the doors of the houses spinning. In the middle of the village was a great space of beaten earth. There stood the war chariots and some ponies tethered and slaves worked

among them. But a part of the space was fenced off and behind the fence slave women were milking cattle, and cocks strutted and a gander walked with his geese. In this farm yard stood the palace of Queen Cartismandua.

It was built of logs, the spaces between them daubed with clay, it rose to more than a man's height, its roof was thatch. For Cartismandua ruled a rich kingdom. Many a farm has not so good a shed now.

A slave girl came out and scattered grain for the geese and the cocks. "Epona!" Brigit called, "Where is my mother?"

"In the river pasture, lady Brigit."

The man Brannus lounged against the doorpost.

"Her Majesty is gone to see a calf," he said demurely. "And my lord Lugotorix to find her."

"The city of the ford bids you welcome, stranger."

Brannus bowed low. "A noble city, a great palace," he murmured. "And what

geese it breeds, princess ! Your flock will be rare eating."

She stared at him in wonder and disgust. Cunoval burst out laughing. " Barbarian ! We do not keep our geese to eat ; nor cocks neither."

" For what then, I pray you ? "

" Why man, for pleasure, for their beauty, for the sport they make.'

" Give pardon ! I am a barbarian indeed. You grow geese in Britain for their beauty ! I did not know. I had not thought of that. But it is noble."

" You do not know Britain ? " said Brigit.

" Not I. I am a poor chief of the Veneti, driven from Gaul by the Roman sword."

" The Romans have conquered your people ? "

" Our ships are burnt and our land laid waste. That was Cæsar's last harvest, princess. This summer he comes to reap in Britain."

" He has conquered all the Gauls now ? "

" There is none stands against him any

more. The eagles make their nests in Gaul."

"And your chiefs live slaves of Rome!" Cunoval cried.

Brannus smiled. "Why, there are poor fools who would not, young man. And some of them, their bones lie under the earth and some go wandering into strange lands begging their bread even as I. But the rest, the wise ones, they live on and rule their tribes and their lands as of old. Only the Roman peace is over all."

"The Roman peace! The Roman master," Cunoval said angrily.

"What is he like, this Cæsar?" Brigit asked.

"A lean bald man, of a face that always smiles yet never laughs, as though all life were merry, yet a little, little thing. Very quick he is; by the southern sea one day, and the next upon the Rhine so that he is always where there is need of him and men counted he would not come upon them. But quickest of all in battle. He sees then all that is in the thought of his enemy, and he strikes

against the plan before it is finished. For he is such a man that he knows the minds of all other men as though they were part of his own brain."

Cunoval laughed contempt. "Why, you fear him like a god!"

"Not I, boy," Brannus smiled. "He is no god, but most a man of any man and all manner of men in one."

"What does he seek, this Cæsar, that he marches to conquer land upon land?" said Brigit.

Brannus looked at her curiously. "You ask more than I know, princess."

"Would he be king of all the world?"

"I cannot tell," said Brannus slowly. "He would smile."

"There are no kings in Rome," said Cunoval. "They change their chiefs when they will."

"It is true, boy. Men pass, and Rome is for ever, and the Roman power. But there has been none like Cæsar."

"Oh he is a god—because he has con-

quered you Gauls," Cunoval cried. "Let him come to Britain, you will find he is a man. We shall not run from him to a land overseas."

Brannus took the taunt meekly. "The gods give you better fortune," he said and turned. Queen Cartismandua was coming.

She was tall as her daughter with the strength of age. She too wore the tartan cloak of her tribe, but a heavy gold chain was about her neck, golden bracelets on her arms and the long plaits of her unsilvered yellow hair hung woven with gold and pearls.

"You are welcome, Cunoval," she said.

Brannus knelt before her and clasped her knees. "I am your suppliant, queen," he said.

She held out her hand and raised him and led him into the palace.

There was one long room, its floor covered with straw and no more furnishing than low tables and one chair. Upon the rough-hewn wooden walls hung swords and breastplates and spears. The single chair was of oak, stained blue and its back and arms were

plated with bright bronze and bone. There Queen Cartismandua sat. She pointed to the ground on her left hand and Brannus squatted in the straw, Lugotorix at her right and Brigit and Cunoval next. An old slave woman came bearing a wooden tray on which were little flat loaves and a horn dish of salt. Cartismandua touched it and bread and salt were set down on the low table before Brannus. "Eat, friend," she said.

"The gods save this house," said Brannus.

"It is my prayer too," Lugotorix pulled his moustaches and looked at Cartismandua with thoughtful, anxious eyes.

Into the hall, something hurried, came a man in white robes. His grey hair was bound by a golden band, but it flowed upon his shoulders, his grey beard grew so full that most of his swarthy face was hidden, but his eyes stood out big and bright. It was Malorix, the Druid of the clan.

"Is this an embassy?" he cried angrily.

"In a manner, yes." Lugotorix rose to meet him. "Good greeting, my lord."

Cartismandua sat still. "They bring us news, Malorix."

"I was not told," he frowned.

"You were sought for."

"I was in the wood with the gods."

"And what do the gods say, Malorix?"

"The gods are angry." Malorix rolled his eyes. "The wind of their breath sings red."

"You hear no other song ever," said Cartismandua.

"My lord is a prophet," said Brannus meekly.

Malorix stared at him. "Who is the stranger that knows me?"

"A homeless man, Brannus, a Gaul."

"A Gaul? You have eaten your doom already. Look upon him, queen, and be warned and feed the gods with sacrifice that their chariots drive with you into war, for the gods are thirsty after blood. The hour comes and now is."

"By the boar! He speaks true, my cousin." Lugotorix cried.

"This is true," said Brannus quickly. "We fought in Gaul and we that were kings and lords are dead and slaves and homeless men——"

"Because you gave your gods no sacrifices," said Malorix.

"Why, we slew them victims enough and the groves smell yet of the burnings. But the legions beat us down, and now the common folk till our lands in the Roman peace. May the gods send you better fortune, queen."

"The gods love war," Malorix cried.

"It may be. For the gods do not die," said Cartismandua. "But we are not gods, Malorix."

Malorix lifted his hand high. "Fail them not!" he said solemnly. "They will avenge it."

"He is right," Lugotorix said. "Let us be true to the gods, and they shall give us the victory. War comes upon us, this is sure, we cannot escape it, queen. Cæsar has eaten up Gaul and he is hungry for us. I have it for certain he has gathered his legions by the

straits and a great fleet of ships. Here is Brannus, who can tell you all his plans."

"His plans?" Brannus laughed. "Not I, my lord. Only the gods know what is in Cæsar's mind. If even to the gods he tells it. But this is not hidden; from all the coast of Gaul he has been drawing ships to Portus Itius; long fighting ships and trading ships, and he is building more. He has gathered his legions there and archers and strangers from afar, a great host."

"How many?" said Cartismandua quickly.

Brannus shrugged. "I have not counted them. Men spoke to me of two hundred ships. He has six legions to bring upon you."

"Two hundred ships sailing together! And in the Straits!" Cartismandua cried. "They would sink each other. It is not possible, friend."

"What Cæsar wills, is always possible, queen."

Cunoval laughed loud. "Two hundred

ships jostling to land between the cliffs of Dubris ! Merry work on the beach ! I pray the gods I see our chariots drive in upon the Romans as they wallow ashore."

" I shall see Cunoval lead the chariots on that day." Lugotorix put an arm about the lad. " Your first shirt of blood shall be rich."

And Cunoval shouted a war cry and Malorix droned in a deep voice. " Blood for the King's son, blood ! The dark blood of Rome smokes to the gods."

" By the boar ! We shall ride them down, I fear them not." Lugotorix said, " But we must be ready, queen. The storm is near. The Roman galley which they saw at Dubris rowed close in, searching the haven, and then came round the Foreland and all along the coast, drawing in here and there, spying at the land, then fled away. The fool Cæsar ! He might as well send us a message that he has all things now prepared and he will fall upon us soon."

" He must come soon if he come at all, or

the gales of the autumn moon will stay him," said Cartismandua.

"That is true, that is most true! Let us make ready then. I have no fear if we stand together each for all." Lugotorix spoke eagerly. "You are wise, my cousin. You know what has always been our weakness in Britain. Every man is for himself. Each tribe fights for its own gain. One king fears another, is jealous of another, will not march with another though both have the same enemy."

Cartismandua drew a deep breath. "Who speaks now, cousin? Lugotorix—or his brother King Segonax—or is it the great King Cassivellaunus?"

"We shall need Cassivellaunus yet," Lugotorix frowned.

"When he has made an end of harrying the Trinovantes, then he will come and help the men of Kent. He has killed their king already. Surely he will be our faithful ally."

"Cassivellaunus honours the gods," said Malorix,

“ It may be, priest. We are not gods,”
Cartismandua smiled.

“ You are bitter against him, my cousin,”
said Lugotorix quickly. “ I do not say you
are wrong or right. Let it be. Cassivellaunus
has a great power and I think we shall need
all the might of Britain. But I would not
have him come to be master of us men of Kent.
Not so ! This I say. Let us stand all
together so that Kent marches on the Roman
as one army. Then we shall have all our
strength to meet the first shock. And after,
if we need more, we may call Cassivellaunus
to aid us still.”

“ Ay, trust each other,” Brannus laughed.
“ We trusted each other in Gaul. And each
left the other at need.”

“ One army,” said Cartismandua. “ That
has one leader.” She smiled. “ Would his
name be Lugotorix, cousin ? ”

“ You mock at me,” Lugotorix frowned.
“ My brother is king in Durovernum, not I.”

“ Long life to him, he is my friend. But I am
queen in the city of the ford. Tell me, is this

from King Segonax, that I should march my people at his order and make him my master?"

"This was not said, Cartismandua," Lugotorix muttered.

"It was thought. But who thought it I cannot tell."

"By the boar! There is no evil in my father's heart," Cunoval cried. "He bade us come and bring you news of the Romans and ask of you that you should call your clan to arms and march with him to Dubris for the danger is upon us all."

"Well said, boy," she smiled. "Say this for me to King Segonax: He is my friend and I will march with him, but I lead my own people and judge my own danger."

"It is your right. He asks no more," said Cunoval.

"The gods bring you safe home," said Brannus and watched Lugotorix who was scowling at the lad.

"The gods thirst and are hungry," Malorix droned. "The winds ache and moan for the flesh of men."

"Look to the omens, Malorix," Lugotorix rose. "The sky is dark before us. Come, Cunoval, let us go."

But Cartismandua clapped her hands and slaves hurried in with steaming dishes and jars of mead.

"By the boar! If the gods are hungry, so am I," Cunoval laughed.

"Sit down, cousin," said Cartismandua. "The Romans will not come to-night. You shall not say that I sent you empty away." And Cunoval took hold of him and forced him, laughing, and Lugotorix sat down again biting his nails.

Men and women came chattering into the hall and squatted in the straw along the low tables, big fair creatures, long limbed, of sturdy frame, jovial with good living.

"You have a strong clan, queen," said Brannus.

"The clan is not here, friend. This company is my own household."

Brannus looked round them. They were many, their tartan cloaks were heavy and

well woven, they wore trinkets of silver and bronze and a silver hilt shone on many a dagger. "The city of the ford is rich," he said.

The little dark slaves were bustling all along the table, dishes steamed between baskets of wheat cakes and jars of mead. There were huge joints of beef, quarters of mutton and pork, roast and boiled. Hands stretched out to them and the daggers cut large pieces and then each man took his and tearing it with fingers and teeth fed himself and his woman. For the queen herself and her guests at the head of the table there was no other way of eating, neither plate nor fork, nor any knife, but what each carried. But they had silver cups for their mead, and down the table there were mugs of earthenware and wood, enough for each to drink in turn abundantly. And drink they did and the hall grew loud with talk of war and the great deeds every man had done and the greater deeds he would do upon the Romans.

"Here are high hearts," said Brannus.

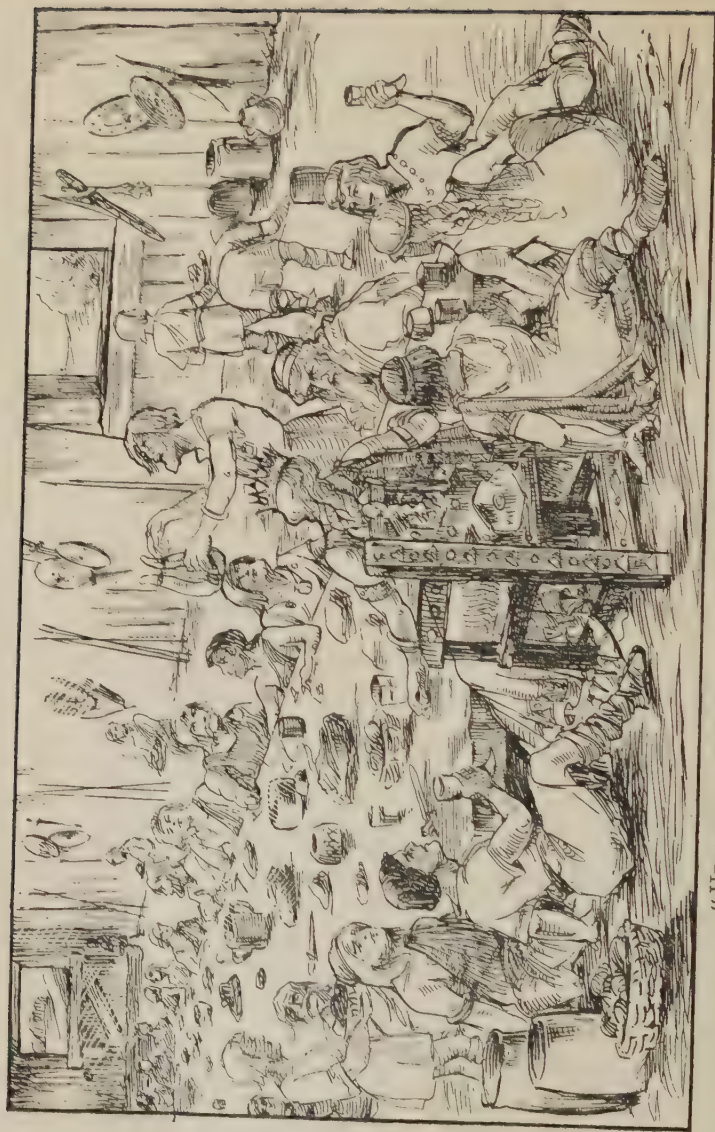
Cunoval clapped him on the shoulder.

"There is no fear in Britain, my little Gaul," he laughed.

"Our peoples' hearts are high," said Lugotorix gloomily, "The gods give us a bold leader."

"Hearts are high before the battle," said Cartismandua. A man rose up from the table by Malorix and waved a little harp, strings drawn across the horns of an ox, and began to sing of war. First his song was of the old victories of the clan of the ford, the exploits of the past. Then he sang of the glory which they would win in the war to come, making a catalogue of the names of the heroes about the table and each man's own excellence. They drank to one another and shouted a refrain which promised ruin to the Romans and mocked at Cæsar.

Lugotorix started up. "Hail to the men of the ford. I drink to you. March to us at Durovernum and you shall drink deep of the blood, the purple blood of Rome."



"HEARTS ARE HIGH BEFORE THE BATTLE"—said *Cartismandua*.

Then they shouted for the Lord Lugotorix and for King Segonax and Prince Cunoval.

"Fare you well," Lugotorix cried. "We go to meet the eagles. Follow after, I will lead you to glory."

"Hear him," Malorix droned, "hear him, men of the ford. The gods are thirsty."

Cartismandua rose. "You are in haste, my lord," she said coldly. "I will not keep you. Cunoval, fare you well." She laid her hand on his arm. "Say this also to your father: I keep faith."

"We also, queen," Cunoval looked in her eyes.

"Watch then," she said in his ear.

It was growing dark, but a bright moon was already in the sky. The ponies were yoked to the chariot by many eager hands and Lugotorix had a jolly word for each man that helped. But Cunoval stood apart in the shadow and Brigit's hand held his. "Come, Cunoval," Lugotorix cried. "Where is the boy? I see! By Mapon, they make a

pretty pair, cousin. But come now, lad, you have to win glory for her."

The chariot jingled away on the track to the downs. For some while Cartismandua stood with Brigit watching it, then she turned quickly and went in. Her household was still at drink and song. She held up her hand and the noise sank. "You waste your courage," she said. "Enough of this." She looked round the hall. "Where is my guest? Where is the Gaul?"

He was not there. Some told her he went out with Lugotorix, some said he had driven away in the chariot.

"He was not in the chariot," Brigit cried. "I am sure."

"So am I sure," Cartismandua bit her lip. "Go some of you, search for him all about, he cannot be far, he must be found."

And they searched all about the city of the ford till the moon set. But they did not find him.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENVOY OF ROME.

IN the morning at Durovernum, King Segonax talked with his son. His town stood guarded by the windings and the marshes of the Stour where Canterbury stands to-day. His palace was built like Cartismandua's, but it was larger and more arms hung upon the walls ; for Segonax ruled a greater kingdom. He sat in his red, royal chair, the pearls shone in the bronze of his breastplate. He felt himself a king by nature. He had a shrewd, comfortable look, he was grown bulky and grey but his eyes gleamed. " She will march with us, but she will be her own captain ! " he sneered. " She need not have said it. She never owned any man her master." He laughed. " See the daughter learns better, Cunoval."

The lad flushed, " Cartismandua will be loyal, sir—She would not have held off, but Lugotorix was too hard with her."

"Ay, Lugotorix drives hard," Segonax nodded and plucked at his breastplate. "Well! It is a good fault in this hour!" he cried. "I wish they were all as bold."

"What do you fear, sir?"

"Fear? By the gods, I fear nothing, boy. But I count my friends. And as it goes, we may stand alone. There are some who have sent to Cæsar to make their peace already; the clans beyond the Thames."

"Cowards and slaves," Cunoval cried, "The gods scourge them!"

"Well! They will be scourged however it goes," Segonax smiled. "If the Roman conquers, he will have his tribute from them. If we beat him off, Cassivellaunus will fall upon them. He knows well they have turned to the Roman for hate of him. But there are some in Kent do not love us, Cunoval. If they let the legions in upon us we have a hard battle."

"Better die than live slaves, my father."

"Do not fear that. You will have chances enough to die, Cunoval, both I and

you." He grasped his son's shoulder—then started up. "By the gods! What now?" A trumpet pealed, there was a scurry of feet.

Lugotorix came in breathless. "My brother, my brother, there is a troop of horsemen coming from Dubris. I have sounded to arms. They are certainly no men of ours. I think them Gauls. I count them thirty."

Segonax put on a helmet and strode out. The town was a frenzy of chattering and running to and fro. The stockade about it was already manned and each man had his sheaf of darts. They were closing the gateway with poles and hurdles. Segonax took his stand there and watched the little company of horsemen, who came on at an easy pace riding in open order with no show of fight. Lugotorix challenged them.

"Halt, there, who are you that come to Durovernum?"

"Commius, King of the Atrebates, comes to speak with King Segonax."

"Do you bring words of peace?"



"COMMIIUS COMES TO SPEAK WITH KING SEGONAX."

"In peace I am here and for peace."

"Let him come to me," Segonax turned away. "Have his horsemen in guard, Lugotorix. Show our strength."

A way was made for the horsemen to file in and they were led to the middle of the town and there were halted, and the clansmen gathered about them, a great muster, and Lugotorix brought Commius into the palace.

He was a lean man of a sharp, wrinkled face, he wore breastplate and helmet of plain iron, dusty from his ride, and no sign of rank but a golden chain.

“Hail Segonax,” he said.

Segonax rose. “What brings the King of the Atrebates to Durovernum?”

“There are men of my tribe in Britain.”

“It is true. But not in Kent.”

“I come to make peace between Britain and Gaul.”

“Britain has no war with Gaul.”

“I bring the word of Cæsar.”

“Cæsar?” Segonax spoke the name with contempt. “I do not know the man. Who is he then, that a king of the Gauls does his errands?”

“Ay, you are simple folk, you Britons. What you have not seen, that is nothing to you. But though you live on the edge of the world, lurking in your thickets, like boars that shun men, you have heard of Cæsar.”

“I have heard of a Roman who was hunting the Gauls like hares. And so you

have fled from him over sea. You are wise, Commius. Be comforted, we will hold you safe."

"You!" Commius laughed. "Oh fool! What could you hold if Cæsar came against you? Not lands, nor town, nor clan, nor child."

"There speaks a man who has lost all," said Segonax. "By the boar! When I have failed so, I shall not live to tell of it. You—you bleat like the sheep that is caught and tethered to lure the wolves into the pit."

"I have lost nothing, Segonax. I am king of my tribe—more lands than were mine—because I had the wit to make Cæsar my friend."

"And you would be king of lands in Britain too—by favour of Cæsar. I know you, Commius."

"Not so. I want no more. But this word I bring you from Cæsar. What I have done you may do also: Be made safe in your kingdom and trample down all your enemies, as the friend of Cæsar. The Roman shield shall be over you, the Roman sword fight for you, you may be lord of all Kent."

“ And the slave of Rome ! ” Lugotorix cried. “ Do not hear him, my brother, he is false, he would buy you to betray us all.”

“ Will you be silent ? ” Segonax frowned. “ I am king in Durovernum yet. Let me hear you, Commius ; all this friend Cæsar will do for me ; what am I to do for friend Cæsar ? ”

“ No more than all the allies of Rome. Keep the Roman peace and march with the Roman war : Give hostages to Rome for good faith and pay tribute to Rome for her guard over you.”

“ No more than that ? ” Segonax said. “ Cæsar’s word is spoken. What is that chain you wear at your neck, Commius ? ”

Commius stared at him. Commius fingered it. “ My chain ? The chain of the king.”

“ No, no, no. The chain of the slave, Commius. What, you do not know it ? Learn then.” He clapped his hands and his clansmen rushed in. “ Take him and guard him close, and put chains upon him, him and

all the slaves he brings. You come in Cæsar's chains, Commius. Wear mine also."

"Lay no hand on me," Commius struggled. "I am the envoy of Cæsar. I am an envoy, Segonax! This is foul treachery. An envoy is sacred. Let me go my way or you are accursed."

"Let you go? Ay, so that you may trick others to let the Romans in on Britain as you would have tricked me. That is the cunning you have learnt of them. What is their word? *Divide et impera*. Divide and conquer. You shall not divide Britain, Commius. We are one against you. Have him away." And Commius was dragged out, invoking the wrath of the gods and the vengeance of Rome. "Look to his men, Cunoval. Let none escape, see them bound fast."

"I do your will," said Cunoval, but he went out slowly. There was the sound of a scuffle and shouting, then all was still.

Segonax took off his helmet and loosed his breastplate and pulled to him a pitcher of mead and drank deep.

Lugotorix came back flushed and laughing and behind him Cunoval mighty solemn.

“Your will is done, sir,” Cunoval said.

“They are bound like victims for a sacrifice.” Lugotorix chuckled. “This was a bold stroke, my brother.”

Segonax looked at him under a frowning brow. “And do you think I fear to be bold?”

“Not I. I honour you. But there is one that has no heart for it,” he clapped Cunoval on the shoulder.

“When I flinch, say my heart fails.” Cunoval flung off his hand. “I do the king’s will. But this is true, I have no pleasure to strike the first stroke upon an envoy and seize men with swords undrawn.”

“Hear him! He is affrighted because this traitor bleats of honour and faith.” Lugotorix laughed. “You have a brave son, my brother.”

“An envoy is sacred and the gods watch over him,” said Cunoval.

“Let his gods help him. Our gods fight for us.”

Cunoval stared at him. "I do not speak your speech," he said.

"Hear me, Cunoval," Segonax cried. "The man is no honest envoy, but a spy sent to make us enemies of another. If I set him free to go his way, he would have beguiled some to take the bribes of Rome and let the Romans in upon us and strike us in the back that they might thrive on our ruin. Thus Rome makes war. Now I hold him fast ; and none shall hear his lies ; but I send messengers to all the tribes of Kent that he brought me this word from Cæsar : If we will not put our necks under the Roman yoke and pay tribute to Rome in corn and cattle and men, he will trample us down. So no man dare flinch from the war and we march against the eagles with all our strength. Was it well done to put this envoy in chains, Cunoval ? "

"It was a king's wisdom, my brother," said Lugotorix.

But Cunoval looked at the ground. "The gods give us victory," he said.

CHAPTER III.

THE EAGLES LAND.

THE last of the moonlight faded over the harbour of Boulogne. It was midnight. Points of light rose from the dark water and gleamed high in air as each ship of a great fleet hoisted her lantern. The night was a medley of sound, creaking of tackle, rattle of oars, shouts of command. A trumpet blew a long call. The galley which carried two lanterns began to move out to sea and after her followed a column of lights.

On board that leading galley, on the high poop, a lean man of middle size turned from



A TRUMPET BLEW A LONG CALL.

the cluster of officers who stood watching the fleet.

“ May fortune sail with us, Cæsar,” one said.

“ Cæsar sails with you, Trebonius.”

He climbed down to the shelter beneath the poop and wrapped his cloak about him and lay upon the deck and fell asleep.

Boulogne harbour, which was Portus Itius then, spread wider than in our day.

It was the mouth of the river Liane, with no more of pier or quay than the wooden jetties and slips of the Roman ship building. The fleet came out with many ships abreast, in no order to satisfy a modern admiral, yet orderly enough, so skilfully the Gallic seamen handled their craft. There were not in the fleet the two hundred ships of which Brannus told in his terrible tale at the city of the ford, but something near a hundred, a squadron of galleys and eighty transports and a few small craft. Two legions were aboard, the 10th, which had won many a fight for Rome and which Cæsar had taught to honour him

like a god, the 7th, which had borne the brunt of "that day he overcame the Nervii," and slingers from the Balearic Isles and archers from Crete and Africa. From another harbour, at Ambleteuse, eighteen ships more were to bring him some squadrons of cavalry. He expected to land an army of 10,000 men in Britain.

The galleys drew ahead fast. Though the wind was fair, their oarsmen gave them more speed than the broad, deep laden transports could make under sail. An officer on the poop beneath which Cæsar slept looked back at the lights fading out against a cloudy sky. "We go to conquer an unknown land and we have left our army behind!" he laughed. "But Cæsar is with us. By Pollux, the war looks well."

"Oh wise man!" a sneer answered him. "Others thought this war out, before you began to think. You shall have your army presently. Before the fourth watch the tide will turn and run east and bring the transports up."

"The tide! What a crazy sea is this which flows now one way, now another, and the gods know how long, how fast. Do you presume to rule the tides, my Volusenus?"

"A man can learn, if he has the wit; and use what he has learnt, if he will think, Trebonius."

"If he thought twice, he would never trust himself to these mad northern seas. I wish your tides may not wash us over the brim of the world, my sailor."

"Never fear. They shall bring you safe to the British shore. Then we may see if you are a soldier."

"Give me my legion ashore and I will eat up all the Britons you can find for me."

"You will have your belly full of fighting before you see Gaul again."

"What, I suppose you know the Britons as you know the tides. Tell me this, wise man, what shall we hammer out of them?"

Volusenus laughed. "You will not make your fortune in this war, Trebonius."

"I believe not. I have not grown as

rich as Crassus in Gaul. Yet there was something to pay a man's debts, here and there. But in Britain! The Gauls swear it is a forest of barbarians who live upon meat like wolves. Faugh, how they will stink. Did you smell them at sea? "

" They are something better than the beasts. They grow corn. But you will find no gold mines in Britain, Trebonius."

" There is talk of pearls in the rivers," Trebonius said gloomily. " I hope nothing of that, for my part. A man may bring in a drove of slaves. But a barbarian fetches nothing in the market now, we have caught so many in Gaul. And I suppose I shall not find a musician or a cook among the Britons. Immortal gods! Why does the bald man lead us against these useless beasts? "

" But you said you were a soldier! " Volusenus laughed. " What does a man want more of war than the joy of it? "

" Tell that to Cæsar! I see him smile. Does he make war for joy? Not he! He goes to war that he may become the greatest

man in Rome and by his victories make money for hiring the little men to serve him. Like you and me, who fight for loot, my Volusenus. But what is there for him in Britain? Neither glory nor gain."

"Ay, you are a little man, Trebonius. Cæsar must lead the eagles to the edge of the world. It is his destiny. He will have all mortal men obey the Roman power. It is his task and he must do it."

"I see him smile!" said Trebonius again. "Say he is a gambler and must have his sport; to stake two legions against the tides and a forest of barbarians."

"Say so then!" Volusenus laughed. "Is it a game too great for you, little man? Say Cæsar must still venture himself against the unknown and march into the dark till he has found it out."

Trebonius shrugged. "Say he is a dreamer. The gods grant he wakes soon."

And the voyage went so that he was not persuaded of the wisdom of Volusenus; for though the tide turned before sunrise and

bore the galleys on across the straits, the wind changed too and the transports, which had no oars, could not keep their course. So when the galleys saw the grey loom of the cliffs of Dover through the dawn twilight, the transports were far out of sight astern.

“ So much for your tides, wise man,” Trebonius said. “ We have found the island and we have lost our legions. Go wake the dreamer.”

But while he spoke a shout came out of the sea : “ Hail Cæsar ! ” Volusenus sprang to the bulwarks and saw a boat drift by, no man in it, rocking half full of water.

“ It is a British boat, a coracle,” he cried.

In the bows of the galley a man was clambering aboard. They hurried down from the poop to meet him : but Cæsar stood before them. “ Who called, Trebonius ? ”

“ The gods may guess, Cæsar. Here is a man boarding us alone.”

The man came aft. “ Brannus, centurion of the Tenth.”

“ How are you here ? ” Trebonius cried.

“ Pardon, Cæsar. I had no time to ask my officer’s leave to come aboard. These coracles are crazy craft.”

“ You have done well.” Cæsar beckoned him into the shelter beneath the poop.
“ What is your news ? ”

“ I have been only in Kent, Cæsar. They have men in plenty. They seek no help from the tribes within the island. Him they call the great king, Cassivellaunus, they will not ask for fear he should make himself their master. It is as it was in Gaul ; each little chief is jealous of the others. These clans of Kent will trust no man to command them.”

“ It is the nature of the barbarians. I sent to them Commius the Atrebas. What word of him ? ”

Brannus grinned. “ He lies in chains, Cæsar. He came offering one little king to make him king of all the rest if he would be the ally of Rome and this little king Segonax holds him captive lest he should tempt another.”

“ Chains for an envoy of Rome ? He is bold, this Segonax.”

“ I do not know. He has a crafty grey brow. He must be bold, lest others be bolder. They have not one mind, these Britons. Their Druids shriek for war that their gods may have blood. Behind the kings stand those who would be kings and seek a chance in war. And each little king watches to pull down the king his neighbour. So they will all go into the war together. And for a while each will strive to be bolder than the other.”

“ You are a prophet, my Brannus,” Cæsar smiled.

“ Cæsar has taught me to watch the minds of men.”

“ I think you like these Britons.”

“ They will make good men when they are drilled, Cæsar.”

“ Well, Rome always needs men. They are to give us a battle then. Are they ready ?

“ More than ready. They yelp for a fight. They are come down to the shore in a great host.”

“ Will they venture afloat against us ? ”

Brannus laughed. "They are no seamen, the Britons. They have no ships. There are a few undecked boats in the harbour, at Dubris. For the rest nothing but coracles such as I came out in, wicker-work covered with hides, a crazy craft to handle. No, they can do nothing afloat. But when the legions have to land we shall pay toll, Cæsar."

"They are well armed?"

"Yes and no. The common men have only spears and knives and clubs, shields of hide and no breastplates nor helmets. But the richer men and the fighting men whom each king keeps for his own guard, they have armour of iron and bronze and good weapons, javelins and sword, and they will come against you in chariots."

Cæsar smiled. "Like the Greeks and the Trojans in Homer. And will the gods and the goddesses drive their chariots, my Brannus?"

"It is true what I tell you," Brannus said earnestly. "They have these war chariots, many hundreds and they can drive very

swiftly on the worst ground and they count upon their chariots to break the legions. But how they make the chariot battle I could not learn, only this, that driving on, they cast javelins and turn and drive away." He laughed. "I do not think they will break my legion so. This is more like a game in the amphitheatre than a battle. But they are big men and bold."

"We are to see a new war, my Brannus," Cæsar said. "You have done well. Go eat and sleep. You have time enough."

It had grown lighter. The cliffs stood clear and gray but the galleys were alone on the sea. The wind was westerly and freshening. The transports could not come up for many an hour but Cæsar gave his labouring oarsmen no rest. As the galleys drew in shore and between the cliffs Dubris harbour opened, they saw on the heights a great host.

"If we go in there, we go no further," said Trebonius. "The barbarians above will beat us down with darts and stones like beasts in a pit."

“ I see it,” Cæsar said. “ I had seen it before I saw it, Trebonius. Go, bid them anchor and signal all the officers to come aboard.” He turned to Volusenus. “ These are your monstrous cliffs then, and away beyond the headland the shore grows flat ? ”

“ We may run the ships on to an open shore let these rogues do what they will.”

A hoarse roar of shouting came from the cliffs and the host of Britons surged hither and thither and the sunshine broke in waves of light from their brandished spears.

“ It will be pleasant to see these chariots upon the beach.” Cæsar smiled.

The legates and the tribunes of the soldiers came aboard and he told them of his plan. He would wait at anchor till the transports came up then sail round the Foreland and land upon the beach at Walmer. “ We fight a new war. We must be swift in all things and most swift to charge at need. Look to my orders keenly then, look for yourselves what the moment asks and fortune shall go with us.”

They lay at anchor there till the slow transports came at last and then when the tide was with them again sailed on under the cliffs.

The four Kings of Kent, Segonax and Cingetorix, Carvilius and Taximagulus and the Queen Cartismandua, watched from the summit where now the castle stands. "This Cæsar shuns the battle that we offer. His heart is cowardly," one said.

"He leads a pack of wolves," said another. "They come on fierce to the fold, but when they see the light of the fires and the watchmen standing ready, they slink away."

"It is true, but half a truth, I think," said Segonax. "They draw off to find a place unwatched. It is in my mind they will sail on to the beaches and there break in upon us."

"Even a man can see it now," said Cartismandua. "I have told you many times, they would not bring a great fleet ashore on the cliffs at Dubris."

“What should the Romans know of our land?” said one. “Cæsar cannot tell where he shall find cliff or beach.”

“I think he knows too much,” Segonax frowned. “Remember he sent a galley to sail all along the coast. I do not doubt he had his spies ashore among us. Come, why do we talk? He goes on round the Foreland and we must follow.”

So they led the chariots on over the cliffs and the mass of footmen toiled after. When the Roman fleet drew inshore to the low ground of Deal, the best of the British host was already marshalled there, chariots down upon the beach, footmen on the banks of shingle above.

“Immortal gods!” Trebonius said. “Here is a greater host than the other. This island crawls with men, like an ant heap.”

“The more slaves to sell,” Volusenus smiled. “Are they not proper men, my Britons?”

The men in the chariots were indeed of bigger make than the Roman legionaries.



THE BRITISH HOST UPON THE BEACH.

But "Men!" said Trebonius. "Who will buy these beasts for men? They are blue! By Pollux, they are blue. What is it in this accursed island that breeds blue men?"

"Be comforted. They are human. This is done to frighten you, my Trebonius. They paint themselves blue when they go to war."

"A mad war," Trebonius muttered and hurried forward, for Cæsar called.

The plan was going amiss. The transports which carried the legions were laden so deep that they grounded in five feet of water and the men, burdened with shields and armour and javelins, dared not plunge in. The manner of the fight before them was strange and promised ill. The chariots drove fast over the shingle, in each two men or more, like no man a Roman eye had seen, huge fellows of long hair, yellow or red, falling to their shoulders, of flowing moustaches and faces and limbs bright blue. Down to the sea they sped their chariots and hurled darts into crowded ranks on the transports and turned and were gone, and behind the whirling chariots the lines of footmen stood deep and from them too, stones and darts began to fly.

“The legions will not venture, Cæsar,” Trebonius said. “This is more than men can do.”

Cæsar stood in the bow of the galley watching the Britons with calm and curious eyes.

“ There is nothing men cannot do when Cæsar leads,” he said quietly. “ Bid the galleys draw off and turn left and row fast.”

It was done and as the little squadron made away a roar of triumph broke from the Britons. Cartismandua watching from her chariot above the beach turned to the men of her clan and held up her hand, frowning, but Brigit cried : “ See, mother, see, the long ships are going, they are in flight already. Ah, look, there is Cunoval in his chariot shouting to us. Victory ! Victory ! ”

But the galleys closed upon the shore and as they came near, the archers and slingers aboard fell to work, shooting fast at the Britons from their right flank, so that they could not guard themselves with their shields and the chariots must needs drive out of range and the spearmen behind huddled in disorder.

Then the standard bearer of the tenth legion cried to the gods and shouted “ Leap down, comrades, unless you will betray your eagle to the enemy. I will do my duty to the

republic and my General." And down he leapt with the silver eagle and struggled up to the beach and in a moment from all the transports, men plunged and followed him.

There was hard fighting. The Romans came on without order, legion mingled with legion, cohort with cohort, taking the chance of the beach, deep water and shallow, firm ground and soft. The British charioteers knew the shore and chose their vantage and moved fast, cutting off little companies and beating them down.

The tide was rising. Some few of the men of the tenth Legion caught in the swift of a deep pool, scrambled upon a rock and dared go no further, the chariots swerved about them and launched upon them a storm of darts. A centurion saw them and dashed among the chariots striking at horse and man and came to them and bade them swim back to the galleys. The charioteers drove far into the sea to strike them as they fled. The centurion stood fast on the rock taking each man's javelins as he went and hurling

them against the bold chariots to cover their escape.

Then Cunoval cried to his gods. For the centurion was Brannus. "In upon him!

Beat him down! His blood is for Toutates! Strike at him. It is Cæsar's spy!"

"Come then, child, come near," Brannus laughed.

Cunoval ran along the pole of his chariot and leapt upon the rock and others of the Britons followed him. For a moment Brannus fought with

them hand to hand; the last of his men was gone. His shield was bent and broken, a dart pierced his thigh, he was beaten down. He rolled into the sea and sank and Cunoval shouted triumph.

But in a little while his dark head came



BRANNUS.

out of the water, he swam to Cæsar's galley and climbed aboard.

The calm face turned a moment from watching the battle to watch him come. "It was well done, Brannus."

Brannus knelt. "Pardon Cæsar. I have lost my shield."

"I have seen," Cæsar held out his hand, raised him and turned again to the battle. "Trebonius! Bid the archers shoot all together upon the chariots there. Then go you ashore and gather every man in that part and lead on at the footmen. They will not stand."

It was done as he said. The chariots on that part of the beach drew off from the hail of arrows. The legionaries there rallied and formed rank and charged on up the beach. Before that ordered mass, the footmen wavered and broke. The chariots came crashing back too late and were caught in the confusion. On the other flank the legionaries, free for a moment, rallied in their turn and they too formed and charged and

all the host of the Britons was swept away in flight and the archers and slingers scourged them as they fled.

Cæsar came quickly up the beach. "You have done enough, Trebonius. Sound a halt."

"If I had cavalry, I would conquer Britain for you to-day."

"Perhaps you have." Cæsar smiled. "These Britons have learnt fear."

On the rolling ground behind the beach men fell to work digging the ramparts of a camp, and others drew the galleys high up the beach. The heavy transports were left at anchor.

"You will not see the cavalry to-night," said Volusenus. "Nor to-morrow if this wind holds: and I think there is more wind in the sky."

"It may be we shall not need them," Cæsar said. "It is in my mind these Britons will be gentle to-morrow."

He judged aright. When the kings of Kent could check the flight and make some order, half their host was scattered, so many

of the common folk were smitten with panic at the great fleet and the arrows that killed from far and the grim machine of the disciplined legions.

Cunoval came in the tumult in the dusk to Cartismandua where she sat with her daughter among the men of her household.

"The king's son has fought well," said Cartismandua.

"Cunoval!" Brigit grasped at his hand. "You are wounded!" for his head was bare and bound up in blood.

"It is nothing. It was Brannus, that accursed spy. And he came safe back to Cæsar! I saw him kneel, the slave."

"But you fought nobly," Brigit cried.

"Bah, what was our fight? We are a herd of sheep and a few staunch dogs fight the wolves for us."

"What is the king's will now?" said Cartismandua.

"I cannot tell. There is no will among us, I think. He would have you come to council."

The four kings of Kent were in no happy humour, each blaming another for the fortune of the day, each telling the rest that his wisdom had forseen it. "The day is lost and gone," said Cartismandua. "I think of to-morrow."

"What does the queen think?" said Segonax quickly.

"I think to-morrow will bring us worse if we fight the Roman again."

Then Lugotorix, standing behind his brother, cried out, "The woman was always for peace."

"Have we prospered by war?"

"We had prospered to-day if we had all fought with one heart," Lugotorix said fiercely. "We may triumph to-morrow if we drive boldly at the Roman slaves. By Toutates! They are few, they are weary, they lack food, let us fall on them with all our strength, and we shall stamp them out."

Cartismandua turned to Segonax. "Who leads us my cousin? Is it Lugotorix?"

"By the boar, none leads!" Lugotorix

cried. "That is our bane and you would have it so."

Then one king said that he was lord of his own clan and another swore that he was not to follow Lugotorix and their kinsfolk struck into the quarrel.

"Peace, I cry you peace," said Segonax at last. "We have all evils already but war among ourselves."

They turned together on him. Well for him to cry peace, he had made the war, flinging Cæsar's envoy into chains; he had hurried them into a struggle to save himself from the vengeance of Rome.

"The man offered me that Cæsar would make me overlord of Kent," said Segonax mildly. "Should I have taken his offer, my friends? I chose to fight for you."

They complained that they should have heard the envoy: the envoy should have been sent back in peace: it was against honour to make prisoner of an envoy.

"Ay, so my son spoke to me," Segonax

sighed and put his arm round Cunoval.
“Hear them lad, they do you right.”

“The Roman was a false spy,” Lugotorix broke out. “Let him die in chains.”

“While our men die under the Roman swords?” said Segonax sadly. “Not so my brother. I dare not. The clan is more than the king. I will go humble myself to Cæsar and give him his man again.”

But the others did not like that either, suspecting some trick to win this way into Cæsar’s favour and become their master and after many words, it was agreed that the four kings should go together and make trial of Cæsar’s mind how they could have peace.

With Cartismandua Segonax walked away from the Council. “Men are like swine, my cousin,” he said. “It is hard to drive all the herd the same way.”

“You were always for peace. I never doubted of that, Segonax.”

“Let none know it then. Not even my son. I would have him honour me awhile yet.”

So in the morning the four kings came to Cæsar in his camp and spoke with him through a Gaulish interpreter. He asked if they came seeking peace and Segonax answered, if it was his will peace should be. Then he complained that they had fought with him who came friendly to their land and Segonax made answer that the British tribes were fierce and quick to meet arms with arms, but faithful to proven friends. Cæsar told him with a frown, that it was the pride of Rome to war down the proud, and tame the fierce : and friendship had been offered the men of Kent and they had made an envoy captive. Segonax was meek and smooth. The words of the envoy were not understood. They were simple folk who dwelt cut off from all the world. It seemed to their clans that he came with threats and the kings could hardly save his life. And indeed he was held captive only that no hurt should come to him. But he should be brought to Cæsar's camp safe and in honour, he and all his men. And they prayed that the favour of great

Cæsar would commend them to the might of Rome.

“When the deeds match the words it is well,” Cæsar smiled. “Let the King Commius be brought to me presently. Your fields must furnish me corn for my legions and your tribes render me hostages of their chief men. When it is done I will speak with you again.”

“All the corn in Kent is yours, Cæsar,” Segonax said. “Give us leave, we go to seek hostages. Our men are scattered far, you have scourged them so.”

But when they were gone, “This old man is smooth, Cæsar,” Trebonius said.

“Ay, he waits on fortune.” Cæsar smiled. And outside the Roman camp, Segonax had the other kings swearing that they would give no hostages. “Wait, wait,” he said. “Draw out the time. We have fought with arms, let us fight with words awhile.”

So Commius was taken out of his chains and brought to Cæsar with a guard of honour and gifts from Segonax and all manner of

assurances that what had been done was only for his safety. Whereof he believed not a word, but was urgent with Cæsar to march on the Britons and avenge him, swearing that they were smitten with fear and divided and would be an easy prey.

But Cæsar did not judge the thing so easy. The only Britons in sight were the little companies furnishing him corn. The host had vanished among the hills and woods. He might march far and not find an army to fight and while he wandered in the wilds, the British charioteers might swoop upon his ships. The legions could not march at the speed of the chariots; and he had no mounted men save the little band which had ridden with Commius. For the transports which were to bring cavalry were not come. He held his legions in camp to wait for them. And the wind which Volusenus had seen in the sky blew contrary.

So the days went by and from the Britons came no hostages. Suddenly at last the wind shifted and on a gusty morning the

transports were sighted ; but as they came near the coast, the wind backed again and rose and they could not hold their course, so they were swept past the Foreland and on down Channel. All day the wind grew stronger and the full moon at night shone through scurrying clouds on a stormy sea. Surging before a northerly gale it broke upon the roaring shingle in great waves and rose higher than ever a tide had come. The galleys which the Romans had drawn above high water mark were set afloat and beaten about the beach. The transports broke from their anchors, were hurled one against another, flung ashore and swept by the waves.

Fear came into the Roman camp, that worst fear of disaster in which no man can use his skill or strength. Not Cæsar himself could save one ship from the storm. There was nothing to do all that roaring night but pray to the gods and await the day.

When the pale dawn broke they came out from their camp to find the most of their fleet lying shattered on the beach and word

went round that they were lost ; no man of the legions would ever see Gaul again.

To the Britons the storm was an omen : it had come on the night of the full moon, therefore it was sent by the gods. It had brought disaster to the Roman fleet ; plainly the gods were fighting on their side. The little companies which had been furnishing the Romans food, stole away to tell their kings what great deeds the gods had done for them.

So when the centurions with oaths and blows were mustering forage parties of sullen hopeless men, it was found there were no guides for them. Trebonius hurried to Cæsar where he was busy on the beach with the Gaulish sea captains making out what ships were lost utterly, what could be salved.

“ The Britons forsake us, Cæsar. My mind is, this thing has turned them against us.”

“ Oh wise mind,” Cæsar smiled.

“ We have no guides to show us the corn.”

“ And you cannot tell corn unless it is shown you. Go, man, take a strong party

and reap where you will. Shall I do everything myself? Go, show a bold front, and all is well."

To Segonax the news of the disaster brought no joy. He had set his mind to draw out time till the autumn rains made it impossible for Cæsar to fight a campaign in Briton and the autumn storms warned him to take his fleet back to Gaul. He had not counted upon a sudden destruction of the ships which would leave Cæsar and his legions cut off in Kent to fight for their lives. He did not like the prospect of such a war.

But the other kings, with Lugotorix to inflame them, were assured that Cæsar had been delivered into their hands, and they vowed victims to the gods and gathered their men again.

For some days Trebonius, going out each day more boldly, plundered the British fields and granaries, none hindering him. Every man of the legions who had skill in handicraft laboured on the shore repairing the shattered ships: some were utterly wrecked. They

used the timbers to patch the rest, they toiled so resolutely under the eye of Cæsar, that he could soon count all the fleet fit to cross the sea again save twelve. It was enough, though but just enough, to carry his legions. He and the Roman energy had found a way to safety out of ruin—if no second storm came upon that open beach.

But Lugotorix had the kings and their host ready to venture a battle again. Trebonius, having eaten up all the country near at hand must needs march far for corn. He had grown so reckless, in days of showing a bold front unchallenged, that he marched into the woodland without scouts. When he came to a field of standing corn he bade all his legion to work with their reaping hooks, he set no outposts, he kept no guard under arms.

Then from the cover of the woods, the British chariots swept down. Among the scattered legionaries they drove at a gallop and from each chariot came showers of darts, for each carried several men and they would run along the pole and fling their spears as

they ran. The Romans were driven hither and thither and could not rally. Wherever some made a stand, the Britons leapt down and closed with them on foot, while the chariots drew off and brought down fresh men and weapons, or if in any part of the field a Roman rank grew strong, there the chariots came and carried the hard-pressed Britons safe away, to turn and shower darts on the Romans as they marched to join their comrades. So there was slaughter and great disorder in the 7th Legion.

The 10th was on guard at the camp. To Cæsar, sitting in his hut with Volusenus and the Gaulish sea captains, talking of the chances of autumn wind and tide, came Brannus.

“Give leave, Cæsar. Where the 7th Legion is gone there is a cloud of dust rising. I pray you come and see.”

“It is well.” Cæsar smiled. “Go, sound to arms.”

“Our bold Trebonius!” Volusenus sneered.

“ If it be as I think it is very well,” said Cæsar. “ We shall have some honour for the eagles before we go.”

He strode to the gate of the camp. He watched the dust a moment. Then to the two cohorts on guard he cried, “ Forward, Cæsar is with you,” and strode on. “ Bring up the rest swiftly, Volusenus.”

What the men of the 10th Legion said of the men of the 7th as they marched is not to be printed. At the sight of the solid ranks of their cohorts, the British chariots drew off and the scattered 7th found itself again and fell in. For some time the two armies stood fast, the Britons howling challenge to attack, the Roman legions in close order waiting their charge. But the British chariots would not venture that. Trebonius hurried to Cæsar. “ They are out of heart. They will not hold us. Give the word, Cæsar. Let me fall upon them.”

“ You have done enough this day.” Cæsar frowned. He saw the chance of victory evade him. The men of the 7th

were sullen and tired in body and spirit. They might hold their ground stubbornly. He could not trust them to attack. And an attack upon the chariots by infantry must be a wild venture. After a little while he marched the legions back to camp.

There followed days of wind and rain. He dared not embark on the rough seas. The Britons could not tempt him to come out and fight in the mud. But they grew impatient and at last Lugotorix was able to persuade the kings to venture all their strength upon the ramparts of the camp. The Romans were few, he boasted, the Romans were wasted with fear and hunger, a bold stroke would destroy them utterly and Cæsar should be a British slave. The Roman power would be broken for ever. Great glory, great slaughter, great booty too.

The British host came on, chariots and foot stretching far across the rolling ground above the shore.

Cæsar was upon the ramparts at the first alarm.

“It is well,” he smiled. “March out, Trebonius. Fortune is with you to-day.”

The legions were drawn up before the rampart. The Britons rushed on to overwhelm them, footmen and chariots together. In that long charge through the mire, men and horses lost their speed and when they were going heavily and breathless, Cæsar gave the word and the legions broke upon them, a storm of javelins, then a solid mass of swordsmen. The British attack was broken and cloven asunder and the whole host shattered into a mob which fled away, each man for himself.

The legions followed far, sparing none their swords could reach. Commius with his handful of horsemen was sent on to press the chase. As long as the daylight served them the legions marched killing and destroying corn and villages. That night the camp was loud with songs of triumph.

But Cæsar paced the beach watching the sky and the sea. There Trebonius came to him. “We bring you a great victory, Cæsar.”

Cæsar stood still and looked at him and laughed.

“ We have hunted them till we were weary. There was none dared stand against us. By the gods, I could have marched all through Britain.”

“ You shall have a triumph, my Trebonius.” Cæsar smiled. “ But to-morrow we sail for Gaul.”

And it was done as he said. Under a calm autumn sky the legions crowded aboard the transports and that night no Roman but their dead was left in Britain.

When the dispatches in which Cæsar told of his invasion came to Rome the Senate voted a public thanksgiving of twenty days for the great deeds he had done. And Lugotorix, after a Roman javelin shaft had been plucked out of his back, took his chariot and went to and fro telling all the clans that his wisdom had driven Cæsar overseas and broken the might of Rome.

And the women mourned for their dead.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SACRIFICE.

WHATEVER he wrote to Rome of victory, Cæsar did not delude himself. No man ever had juster judgment of what he had done, clearer sight of what he had failed to do. None was ever more resolute to refuse defeat. As soon as he had his legions safe ashore in Gaul he was making plans for a greater invasion which should not be weakened by the faults of the first. The Britons could put more men in the field and they fought more hardily than he had foreseen. He must bring against them not two legions but five. To defeat the tactics of their swift chariots infantry could not suffice. He must have a strong force of cavalry. Such an army would need many more ships than all his shattered fleet, and there must be none which lacked oars to be at the mercy of wind and tide, to lag behind like the slow transports which bore the legions, to fail him altogether like the squadron which never brought the

cavalry ; the whole army must be carried swiftly across the Straits and landed together in full force. He ordered hundreds of new ships to be built, each light and fast and fitted for a bank of oars like the galleys. In all the harbours and rivers of Northern Gaul men fell to work to do his will. Thus the winter was spent.

So great an enterprise could not be secret. Whatever war the Roman masters of the world might order, men still had need of trade. Ships stole across from Gaul to fetch the tin of the Cornish mines : it was more precious than ever, so much bronze was needed to equip Cæsar's new armament. And if Britain furnished the Gauls with the tin to put in the fleet which was to invade her, she took the price in weapons and armour to use against the invader. And with those trading ships came news, slowly and broken, but sure.

The spring was bright again. In her palace in the city of the ford Cartismandua sat weaving with Brigit and her women.



"CARTISMANDUA SAT WEAVING."

The loom was a simple framework of beams, holding the strands of many-coloured yarn like a curtain, and they passed the shuttle slowly in and out and to and fro with tedious careful labour.

Cunoval came in quickly and kissed her hand and Brigit stopped counting the blue

threads and stood looking at him and blushed.

"The gods be kind to this house," a gruff voice spoke in the doorway and Segonax lumbered in.

"You are welcome, my cousin," Cartismandua said.

"I thank you. It is good to be here." He grinned at Cunoval, who was making a fine figure of himself and looking anywhere but at Brigit. "Eh, lad? Go, find me that pouch of mine, I left it in the chariot." Cartismandua waved her women out and Brigit went close on Cunoval's heels. "They make a noble pair to my eye, cousin," Segonax chuckled.

"The boy comes bravely to manhood."

"The girl grows to her mother's likeness. I have seen no better fashion of a woman, cousin. The boy—he has outgrown his father, I think. Well—he has something to learn. But he will not do a mean thing."

Cartismandua looked at him gravely.

"I am content she should go to him."

That was said long ago. Do you ask me again? "

" No, no. I have no doubt of you. No, a good marriage, if it may be. The gods grant it shall be a long marriage. But the sky is dark." He made a grimace. " My Druids go preaching the gods are angry with us."

" The Druids ! " she said scornfully. " Do you trust a Druid, Segonax ? "

" When storms come I trust no man, no, not my brother," he growled. " I trust myself. I am my own king."

" It is well said ! Malorix here, he is always crying for blood. He works to set the clan in a fever."

" Ay the Druids are all for war," his grey eyes darkened, " that is to be thought of, my cousin."

" Why— " she was beginning to answer when Brigit and Cunoval came back, still something flushed but merry.

" Rogues, you have taken your time," Segonax chuckled.

"Give me the pouch. Here my princess," he drew out a necklace of amber, "I had this for the price of a good tree from a Northman that came ashore dismasted. See the rich glow. He swore it was as old as the world. Hang it on that noble round neck of yours. Never blush again. This is not the bridal gift." He pinched her chin and turned away. "Come, cousin, I must see these cattle of yours." Out they went.

"Oh, he is kind," said Brigit.

"Yes, he is very kind," Cunoval laughed and kissed her.

"But he did not come to bring me this."

"He came to bring you me," said Cunoval.

"That indeed! You would not come till you were brought. No, be still, boy. He came to talk to my mother. I saw his eyes. They do not smile, Cunoval. No, tell me true. Is there more news of war?"

"Not that I know. The Romans will come again this summer, my father has that for certain now, and with more ships. But we cannot tell when. By the boar, you are

not to fear them, Brigit. Our chariots will drive over them again till the storms shatter their fleet and they crowd the sinking hulks back to Gaul."

"Ah, Cunoval!" She clung to him. "Who knows the end?"

In the fenced ground about the palace Segonax and Cartismandua walked together. "Why should all the Druids work to make our people mad for war?" she said.

"I know many reasons why. I do not know which is the right reason. Every man is greedy for his own honour. Many victims offered to the gods bring honour to your Druid and war sends victims to the sacrifice. Where Rome rules, the Druids are put down. The Roman peace will not suffer the sacrifice of men. And there is another reason yet." The grey eyes glanced at her. "I think my good brother Lugotorix is much the friend of your Druid Malorix."

"I have marked it. Lugotorix is wild for war, cousin."

"My brother loves to lead. Yes. My

good brother is gone now to Cassivellaunus. He also is a man of war. And he has cherished the Druids all his days. I think of all these things, cousin."

"Think, yes, but what is to do?"

"Nothing, nothing."

"Ah, that is like a man!"

"Yes, I am only a man, Cartismandua." He looked at her heavily. "I am in such a case that I cannot do what is wise. Therefore I do nothing. If I were lord in Kent, I would meet the Romans in peace and bid them welcome. Then we should pay some tax by the year to Rome and the Roman shield would be over us. But I have not power. My clan crave to fight, poor fools. And if I sent an envoy to Cæsar I could hardly hold them quiet. There are other kings in Kent and they will not be ruled by me, they are all for war now. They think they had the victory of Cæsar last year. Shall I become his ally and let him in upon them? I dare not. We are of one blood. We must stand together."

" I think of my own clan, Segonax," she said.

" Why so do I." He looked at her and chuckled. " Perhaps I think also of poor Segonax. If I sought to make a private peace with Cæsar, there are those would eat me up. Do you hear news of Cassivellaunus, my cousin ? "

" They say he makes ready to lead a great host against the Romans."

" I believe that. Yes. Cassivellaunus has been waiting long to bring many tribes under his command. His chance comes now. My good brother is gone to him." Segonax looked at her sideways. " You have not seen Lugotorix, cousin ? "

" He loves me little."

Segonax contemplated her with a gleam in his wary grey eyes. " Perhaps we do him wrong, cousin. But I think my brother has his plan for this war. Cassivellaunus would be king of kings. The man who could help him to it, that man would stand high. It is in my mind that Cassivellaunus will come to

us presently and offer us help with all his power if we will make him our leader."

"If we will make him our master!" Cartismandua cried.

"It is true. Others may think of it so." Segonax nodded. "Others may say so."

"Better have the Roman our lord than Cassivellaunus."

"But that I should not say," Segonax chuckled. "Not aloud, my cousin. Patience, patience, let us draw out the time." He laid his hand on her shoulder. "We are of one mind, you and I."

"To do nothing."

"To do nothing—till we can. It is old folks' wisdom. Yes, I grow old, cousin. Come let us find the young ones. By the boar! They are all we have in the end of the day."

The spring went by. To Cartismandua came others of the kings of Kent. They also had heard that Cassivellaunus would bring help if they would march under his command and they were angry and frightened.

She saw that Segonax had been at work upon them and encouraged them in their rage.

When the apple blossom was falling the great King Cassivellaunus came himself to the city of the ford. With a guard of chariots he came and fifty men full armed and his trumpet sounded at the gate of the city. But the Queen did not come to greet him. The old warrior who had the guard on the stockade led him through the huts to the palace. She stood in the door with her daughter.

“Do I see Cassivellaunus?” she asked coldly.

“I am the King.” He was a big man and bulky. He glittered gold on brow and neck and arms. His full red face was masterful.

“You are far from your own lands. Are you come in peace?”

“I have no enemies in Britain, Cartismandua.”

“Be welcome to my house, friend.” She led him in. She gave him honour, a chair beside her own chair, a silver cup for his

mead and Brigit for his cup-bearer. "What does Cassivellaunus seek of me?"

"Good will and alliance." He lifted his cup. "I pledge you, sister."

"I thank you." She touched a cup with her lips. "You come alone?"

"I come to do king's work, Cartismandua. I have grave words for you of policy and war. That must be in my own hand."

"I heard the lord Lugotorix was with you."

He frowned. "Lugotorix? Oh ay, he came to me from Segonax and to Segonax he is gone with my council. Thus it is." And it was what Segonax had foretold. Never a doubt there was grave danger. Cæsar was coming with a mighty army and swiftly and the brunt of the fight would fall upon the men of Kent. They could not endure it, they would be beaten down, their towns burnt and their corn; their cattle killed. They would be driven in herds to the Roman slave market. But the great King Cassivellaunus was willing to come to their help. When he called his men to war all Britain between the

fens and the mountains would march with him. He could save the kings of Kent if they chose to put themselves under his shield. For when Cassivellaunus took the field he would have such a host as should overwhelm all Cæsar's legions, he would encompass them with swarms of chariots, he would harry them and huddle them together like sheep hunted by a pack of wolves and then fall upon them with his thousands of footmen and trample them into dust.

"Be it so. So a war ever is, before it is fought," said Cartismandua.

"So it will be, I say it. And I am Cassivellaunus. No king nor tribe ever stood against me. You know it. March with me then and I will deliver you." He bent his red brows. "But if I march with you, I must lead you, and your men be at my order and do my will utterly like my own. Put your power in my hand and I will save you. Else are you all dead and slaves."

"You have spoken," Cartismandua bent her head.

"Speak then, queen."

"Yes. I am queen of the city of the ford. But I rule one tribe and there are others in Kent. I cannot speak for all."

"Speak your own choice."

"If I must be dead or a slave, I shall not be a slave, Cassivellaunus." She looked at him steadily. "Are you answered?"

"This is no answer."

"I will fight if I must. I will live if I can. A slave I will not be. Are you answered yet? I am queen of a free people, Cassivellaunus."

"By the boar! They will not long be free nor you queen," he cried and started up and strode out and so went away in a rage.

That same night Malorix the Druid called the clan together, for he said he had a message from the gods. When they were met in the moonlight he made a long chant of visions of war and slaughter till they were wildly excited and singing songs of battle and dancing with clash of sword and spear and shield.

Thereafter, he spent his nights, as he said, in vigil in the oaken wood or among the stones of Toutates communing with the gods. Every day he was among the clan prophesying war and singing the praises of Cassivellaunus, king of kings, who would lead the sons of Britain to a bath of blood and rich victory.

"This man is mad, mother," Brigit whispered. "I fear him."

"You must fear nothing. You are a king's daughter."

"It is this man who is our king now. He has all the clan at his will."

Cartismandua looked at her strangely. "My will rules while I live, know that, Brigit."

But there came a day when Malorix led the clan to the palace and cried, "Oh queen, the gods have spoken this night. The war is near. Give us a victim for the gods that they may show us their will in blood." And the clan shouted: "A victim! A victim! Let the gods have blood."

Cartismandua flung her arm wide.

“ Choose among you ! Who has the will to die ? ”

Then they were silent, each man looking at his fellow. But Malorix cried out. “ The gods ask a woman.”

Cartismandua let her arm fall. “ The gods speak with the voice of a man. What war shall this be that is begun with woman’s blood ? Judge you, my people. This Druid has not heard the gods aright. Or they mock at him.”

She made the clan stir and mutter by that. But Malorix started forward and seized her slave girl, Epona. “ A victim ! A victim ! ” he cried. “ The queen’s woman shall be our sacrifice. The gods have chosen. I see the blood mark on her brow. Take and bind her, children.” The girl was dumb with fear and he dragged her away and the clansmen flung themselves upon her and bound her and carried her off to the stones of Toutates on the hill.

“ Mother ! ” Brigit gasped.

Cartismandua stood very still and calm.

“ The Druid has chosen, ” she cried. “ Mark it well, my people. The Druid has chosen, not I. Let the gods judge. This night we make the feast of the sacrifice.” She swept into the palace.

And that night in the palace the clan feasted and drank deep while Epona lay bound upon the stones. When it was near moon rise, when Malorix must go and keep vigil by the victim, Cartismandua held out to him her own cup. “ Pledge the victory, Druid, ” she cried.

Then the clan, those who could still stand, rose shouting “ Drink deep, Druid, drink deep, ” and Malorix drained the cup and wrapped his white robes about him and went out.

When the clan was drunk and sleeping Cartismandua went out from her city into the night and as she went she took a lamb from the fold and bound its legs and bore it away.

The stones about the mound of Toutates glimmered grey in the moonlight. In among



CARTISMANDUA RESCUES EPONA.

them, a white blur, Malorix lay in heavy sleep from the poppy juice of the queen's cup. Cartismandua passed him by quickly and came to Epona, lying bound hand and foot, drawing her breath in sobs.

"Be silent. I am the queen. Be silent, child. You are to live." Cartismandua laid the lamb down beside the girl and cut her bonds and raised her. "Away swiftly. Go hide in the woods. There shall be food by Caradoc's glade in the morning. Go, none must see you in many days. But this is the tale you shall tell. There came a great red man like King Cassivellaunus and carried you off into the woods and he said he was Toutates. Go," and Epona kissed her feet and fled and she went back to the city.

So when Queen Cartismandua led her clan out to the sacrifice in the morning they found their Druid sleeping as he were dead and by him no woman victim but a lamb bound in her stead.

"Look you, my people. Look well," Cartismandua cried. "The gods will have

no blood of ours. Look well. The Druid is besotted. The gods mock at him."

The men of the clan shook Malorix awake and he rolled his heavy eyes and spoke thickly and for some while could not understand the laughter and the taunts. Then he staggered to his feet and shouted that the doom of the gods was upon them, they were accursed.

"Not we but you, Druid," Cartismandua said. "It is you the gods put to shame."

And the clan howled at him and would hear no more of him and he slunk away mumbling and shaking. For he believed in his gods and was utterly afraid.

Thus Cartismandua held command of her people and no man again urged them to war. And of the other tribes of Kent there was none whose king would put himself under the lordship of Cassivellaunus. When Cæsar came, they were as they had been, each his own master, ready to fight, but each for his own hand.

CHAPTER V.

CÆSAR'S WORK.

MIDSUMMER came and passed and the British watchmen on the cliffs of Dubris saw never a Roman ship. Cæsar's plans were hindered. The Gauls made trouble. He saw signs that they had come to think themselves unconquered. He had to march away from the coast to teach a strong tribe fear again. When he came back the winds blew contrary day after day. When, in the first week of July, he began to embark his army, Dumorix, a prince of the Gauls who should have gone with him to Britain, led his horsemen out of the camp. Cæsar stopped the embarkation and sent all the cavalry in pursuit. Dumorix was killed, crying out as he died that he was a free man of a free country.

Such a beginning to an expedition which would take the legions away from Gaul overseas to a campaign for the conquest of an unknown land, might have checked most of

the generals who are called great. Cæsar bade the embarkation go on. But something he yielded to caution. He had eight legions and four thousand cavalry. Two thousand cavalry and three legions he left behind in Gaul under the best of his officers, Labienus. With his army thus divided he still had a great force to bring against Britain, five legions, two thousand cavalry, and archers and slingers, some twenty-five thousand men, more than twice as many as he led on the first invasion.

Towards sunset the first squadrons of his fleet began to move out of the crowded harbour of Boulogne. Once the Britons had jeered at the threat that a hundred ships could cross the Strait together. Through that calm night of July more than six hundred sailed. The wind was no more than a light air from the south-west, but before midnight the tide began to make up Channel and bore them on fast, no need of oars in galley or transport, and in the end too far. When day broke they saw the grey cliffs astern and

the beach of Deal far away to port. In a little while the tide turned, then they went about and put out their oars and so well the soldiers rowed in the heavy transports that they kept pace with the galleys and the whole fleet came together to the flat shore between Deal and Sandwich.

The shore was empty. Not a man moved on it, none kept watch. It was a windless sea and a falling tide. The ships were rowed in and took the ground easily, an endless line of hulls poured forth men.

“ This is another sort of landing from last year’s,” said Trebonius. “ The Britons have learnt their lesson.”

“ Yes, they have learnt something,” Volusenus answered. “ And we too, I hope,”

Cæsar turned upon him. “ What should we learn, my friend ? ”

“ Why Cæsar, some of us might learn to send on scouts when we march and post guards when we forage,” Volusenus grinned and Trebonius found himself called away to his legion.

Before the fleet sailed the kings of Kent were agreed upon one thing ; they would not fight upon the shore. Since they had failed there against a little army, they saw nothing but disaster in challenging on the shore and the open ground such a host as the great new fleet would bring. Their watchmen on the cliffs at Dubris, counted the ships at dawn and found the number as terrible as rumour had told. The kings, waiting the news with their fighting men among the wooded hills, were confirmed in their policy. The Romans should seek them, not they Cæsar. When the legions were far from their ships, tangled in the woodland and the broken ground, then the clans might give them battle with good hope of victory. The four kings made oath to bring all their men to the fight and be of good faith one to another.

Where they should choose their battle-field was not decided, for each king declared that the Romans would surely march upon his country, and so until Cæsar made plain the plan of his campaign, they could only

agree to wait and watch. But Segonax had no doubt that the legions would come through his lands and by his city of Durovernum, the track by which all trade went from the Straits into Britain, the only good track from the coast, led that way. Durovernum guarded the passage of the marshes of the Stour, it was the inner gate of Britain. By their hold on it Segonax and his clan had grown rich. The Roman must capture it, if he would conquer the land.

Segonax had no mind to surrender it without a fight. He dared not. His clan would not obey a king who flinched from battle. His brother Lugotorix had already grown to dangerous power by preaching war and promising victory. He held himself bound in honour and policy to stand by his brother kings. But he was without hope that Durovernum could be held. In the loss of it, he proposed to lose as little as might be. He sent all the old men and the women and children of the clan away into the thickets of the Weald and with them all his treasure and

his cattle. The bulk of his fighting men he set to strengthening the old fort on the hill above the Stour which guarded the passage of the river. With the rest he waited and watched till he could be sure what Cæsar would do and what the other kings.

On the rolling ground beyond the beach the legions laboured building a rampart for their camp. The cavalry were sent out to search the countryside and at nightfall they came back with news that the Britons had retreated into the hills. "It is well," Cæsar smiled, "Let the men eat and sleep. We march at the third watch."

"At the third watch," Trebonius saluted.

But Volusenus frowned and plucked at his chin. "Give me leave, Cæsar. The ships are not drawn up yet and we have a mile of ships to-night."

"Our wise man. Our mariner," Trebonius laughed. "He is in no haste for the clash of swords."

"Peace. The ships are in my mind, Volusenus. I leave Quintus Atrius with ten

cohorts to guard the ships and three hundred horse. It shall suffice."

" Pardon, Cæsar. For a guard, yes, it is enough. But there is no guard shall ward off a storm while the ships lie low on the beach."

" He looks behind him still, our wise man." Trebonius chuckled.

" Go, give the order, friend." Cæsar frowned.

" I think of last year, Cæsar." Volusenus looked at him steadily. " If the ships were drawn high above the tide marks they would be safe whatever comes. With all the legions at work, it needs but a few days."

Cæsar smiled. " Yes, it is true, wise man. But in war you shall never be safe, do as you will. Cæsar does not seek safety. Cæsar is swift to conquer. Look, while we wait to make safe your ships, the Britons gather strength and grow bold. I march on and strike them down when they think me still far off and the fear of Cæsar comes over the land."

"Fortune march with you," said Volusenus. And in the dead of night they marched.

Before that hour, in the dusk of evening, Cartismandua came to Segonax at Durovernum, leading her chariots. "What, cousin!" he stared at her. "Are you come to fight?"

"If you fight here for your land, these my men fight for you."

"By the boar! This is brave—and kind."

"It is as it must be. There would be no life in Britain for me or mine if I left you to fight alone in your hour of need."

"I hold to you," he gripped her hand. "Be sure. Your girl is for my boy. I will maintain their heritage."

"We work for those who come after," she said and smiled. "So it is all our days."

"Yes. I fight for Cunoval." His grey eyes gleamed. "But hark, cousin," he lowered his voice, "I do not fight here to the death. This is a show of battle, to save our honour. Half the clan I have sent into the

forest, with the women and the cattle and all which the Romans could take. I would have you risk no more."

"Do you think you can be more careful than a woman?" she said. "My treasure is hidden and my cattle driven off. I bring you here only the men of my own household. The clan—the clan has no heart for this war. The omen of the sacrifice was evil."

Segonax chuckled. "I heard of that, cousin. Cunoval was chill at heart for it. Myself, I had a guess."

"Brigit had some guess I think. But there are things which one does not tell to children."

"By the boar! I was dumb as a stone and gloomy. It came wholesome for my Druids. They were too fierce. They sang to the tune of my good brother."

"Ah, how is it with Lugotorix?"

"Well. Very well. He has his war now. He is to have his battle." The grey eyes twinkled. "Yes, the very brunt of it is for Lugotorix, so is he honoured. We have

built up the old stockade upon the hill and there Lugotorix has the command with his own household, with a party of our footmen and if it please my faithful brothers the kings to send footmen of theirs in time, them also he shall have. If he can hold it against the legions, it is well—and I shall think more of him than I am apt to think. For it is in my mind that Lugotorix does not fight a desperate fight. But he must stand a while for shame and while he holds the Romans in front Cunoval and I will harry them with our chariots and all the kings may send us. So Cæsar may learn that there is nothing to gain by fighting us, but some dead men and an empty town and corn unripe.”

“It is a good plan,” she said.

“I could find no better. The best plan for a bad plight, cousin. At least it sends Lugotorix to fight where Cunoval will not be fighting.”

She took his hand. “Watch over the boy, my cousin.”

“What else have I?” Segonax said. He turned. “Where is the rogue?”

“There in the dark. Let them be. They have their hour.”

But Cunoval, holding Brigit close, was talking of the ways of chariot fighting and his plan for the battle and the great deeds he would do.

In the dawn the Romans came. The other kings had sent little help to Segonax. With his chariots and a few horsemen he was watching the ford by which the track crossed the Stour. The clatter of cavalry was borne on the freshening wind. Between the river and the eastern sky the land gleamed in a thousand flashes of light, which drawing nearer became an army, many squadrons of cavalry and a long column of the legions beyond, such an army as never marched before on British soil.

They muttered fear. “Stand to it yet!” Segonax cried. “We will try their manhood,” and he led his chariots down to the ford and they met the Roman horsemen with

a storm of darts. Though they made some confusion and took a toll of horses and men, the squadrons pushed on boldly, crossing through shallow water and deep, all along the river. The Britons dared not stay to fight hand to hand but turned their chariots and scattered and fled away into the woods.

There they could not be caught and they did some damage shooting their darts from the cover of the thickets. But the legions marched on and the horsemen guarded their flanks well.

The track led up hill from the river and on the summit of the wooded hill the way was blocked by the rampart which Lugotorix held with his footmen. The advance was checked. The cavalry could make nothing of a stockade too high to leap. The legionaries pressing on could neither climb it nor break through, for it was built of sturdy timber, the trunks of trees fixed by great stakes driven into the ground, and from the top the Britons thrust off any who came



"TESTUDO, TESTUDO."

upon it with long spears or beat them down with darts and stones.

While thus the Romans were held in the wood, the British chariots moved hither and thither striking sudden blows all along the column. They did some slaughter with little loss to themselves, but they could not shake

the disciplined ranks. In a little while, the word was passed through the 7th Legion: "*Testudo, testudo,*" which means a tortoise. The front ranks stood close and raised their shields above their heads, each shield overlapping another to make a roof of armour like a tortoise's shell. Stooping beneath it they moved upon the British rampart and with their free right arms hacked and hewed at the timber. Upon the roof of shields, the British darts and stones fell harmless. The rampart was torn away and the tortoise broke through and behind it the rest of the legion charged in. But they found few to kill. Lugotorix led his men in flight away to the coverts of the wood. And all the Britons were as if they had never been.

"Bah, we fight flies," said a tribune mopping his brow. But Trebonius hurried to Cæsar. "It is a great blow. They are broken. Give the word, I follow them."

"Whither?" Cæsar smiled. "It was a blow well struck. It is enough for the day. Let the men build camp."

In the dusk Segonax drew his scattered clan together beyond the woods on the steep open ground to southward where now is the mound of Chilham Castle. It was a fortress even then, a round rampart of earth, for in an earlier time men had fought there with the great giant Julianber, whose tomb you may see yet, down in the valley, under the green slopes which men call to-day the Julliberrie downs.

There in the fort the clan lay and munched dried meat and grumbled and foretold ill fortune. Lugotorix limped in with some weary footmen. "The gods be praised! You come back to us my brother," said Segonax gloomily. "I have lost most other things this day, city and land. Well, I have you and your war."

"I did not make it," Lugotorix growled. "I have to fight it for you and with no men, that is my part. By the boar! if I had had another ten score trusted to me, I would have held the rampart yet. I fought to the last, Segonax. What of your fight?"

"We fought while you fought, my brother," Segonax smiled. "We also live. Praise the gods."

"I have struck them a great blow. They dare not follow us. They have learnt how Britons can fight."

"That I believe," Segonax mumbled.

"It is the legions," Cunoval cried, "we cannot break the legions. I drove close and shot down man after man, but they stood fast."

"Bah, you are too young for war, boy," Lugotorix sneered. "You should have driven your chariots full upon them. They would not stand."

"That wall of shields! The horses will not face it, I tell you."

"Oh, if you flinch, your horses will face nothing."

"You did not die on the rampart, my brother," said Segonax.

"Others died," said Cartismandua. "Why do you brag, Lugotorix? You have done as you could and it brings nothing

but death. This Roman host is too strong for us. Let us think of to-morrow."

"You think late, queen. We might have been strong to-day if you had struck hands with Cassivellaunus. This war needs all Britain."

"Trust Cassivellaunus!" Segonax mumbled. "Give him all Britain, he will defend it. Trust Cæsar, Lugotorix. So will he."

While they talked so, there was a rattle of chariots and the other kings of Kent came in a fever of haste, Cingetorix and Taximagulus and Carvilius. "You have fought, Segonax? The news came late. We hurry to your aid. What fortune?"

"Yes, you come late," Segonax growled. "I have fought and I have fought alone. I have lost city and lands. Give me joy."

"The Romans are strong?"

"Oh ay, some little strength. No matter. Thousands for my hundreds. That is all. We have done as we could and here we lie having lost all, broken, licking our wounds.

Never care for us. We have fought our fight."

"Courage yet!" they cried. "Hold fast yet. We gather our men. We will march swift. Make good the fort here a day and we stand with you, each for all."

Segonax started up. "Stand here? Hold this fort? By my father's soul, I have fought for you enough. Fight for yourselves. I have lost all to hold the Roman off and my clan are homeless men to-night. Of you we had no help. Stand with you? We go into the forest to stand with boar and wolf. My clan shall not be your sacrifice. Get you gone. You have held off. You have cared for your own. I have done enough for you."

They tried to make him talk of it more, but he would not, he drove them out of the fort.

"So you are soon tamed, my brother," Lugotorix sneered. "You hold out your neck for the Roman yoke?"

"No yoke on my neck. Neither from Cæsar nor Cassivellaunus. I draw off into the Weald."

“ And the queen with you ? ” Lugotorix turned to her.

“ I go to my own city,” said Cartismandua. “ I think for my own people. Segonax ! While my city stands there is a home for you and yours.”

“ That I know, cousin.” He turned to Lugotorix. “ And my brother ? My brother, as I guess, goes to Cassivellaunus ? The gods prosper it ! ”

Lugotorix laughed angrily. “ Yes, to Cassivellaunus I go. This war is not fought yet. He will not faint with one poor fight. Have courage, Segonax. We are not all to be slaves.”

So the Roman camp was left in peace that night, and when dawn broke the sentinels could see no movement in the woods, hear nothing. Cæsar sent out his cavalry to search that broken blind country for the vanished Britons, in three divisions to strike out three diverging lines, since no man could tell which was the likeliest way, and each brigade had infantry in support lest the

British chariots should be bold. But the last ranks were not out of sight of camp, when a party of horsemen came up the track from the coast riding hard.

The sentinels shouted a challenge and the answer came back in Latin. "A message for Cæsar from Quintus Atrius." Cæsar met them before the rampart. A man sprang from his foaming horse and saluted, "Brannus, centurian of the 10th."

"I know you. You should bring good news."

"Thus says Quintus Atrius: last night the wind rose with the tide and the ships which lay at anchor broke from their cables and the ships which lay upon the beach were washed away and the captains and the sailors could not rule them, so wild was the sea, but all were beaten together and flung ashore and have had great damage."

"You have seen it?"

Brannus made a grimace. "There is a mile of wrecks, Cæsar."

Cæsar strode into the camp. "Trebonius!

call back your three divisions. You march to the ships with every man. Be swift. I go before you. Mount me a squadron, Volusenus, and ride with me."

The two looked at him, looked at each other and hurried away. "The ships," Trebonius muttered, "immortal gods, the ships again! To conquer this island a man must rule the sea."

"That also can be done," said Volusenus.

"Show him the way then!" Trebonius cried and they parted and gave their orders.

When Volusenus came back with his squadron Cæsar stood waiting. "What said my good Trebonius?" Cæsar smiled.

"He said, to conquer this island a man must rule the sea."

"He grows wise." They rode away. "And what said Volusenus?"

"I answered him, that also Cæsar can do."

"If he will learn of Volusenus?" Cæsar smiled.

"That I did not say."

"You are loyal. But it is in your heart.

What, man, you judged wisely, we should have stayed to haul up the ships. I know it and knew it then. But I am Cæsar. I must be more than wise. All my life is a fight with time, so much there is no man can do but me, so few are my days. I cannot stay to be careful. I must dare and dare again and defy the nature of things to rule my will. I am Cæsar."

"Lead, I follow," Volusenus said.

When they came to the shore, the ruin was worse than the message told. The great fleet lay groaning and tossing in an angry tide, hulls sunken, awash and afloat, hammering each other into a mass of wreckage that never would sail the sea again, and above the tide the shingle was strewn far and far with shattered timber.

But the legions came back to the camp in good heart and singing. The new disaster had not the terror of the first, the peril was not unknown, what they had done before they were prepared to do again. Before the tide went out, they were already at work dragging

out of the ebb what hulls looked most seaworthy and on the ebb a galley rowed away to Gaul with orders for Labienus to send every sound ship he had and gather more.

There came days and nights of endless toil. First every ship was drawn above the tide mark and though twenty thousand men laboured watch and watch the task was long. But that was not enough for safety. While every craftsman in the army was busy patching the damaged hulls, the mass of the legions was set to haul the ships clear of the shingle to the high ground which no storm could reach. They must needs go into the woods and fell trees to serve as rollers beneath the keels, they made rough capstans and fitted tackle, and when they had ships high on the turf they built a rampart which should guard all the fleet in one vast fortified camp. From dawn to dusk each long day they worked, from dusk to dawn they worked by torch light, to no man in the army more than few hours of sleep in the twenty-four ; but ten days were spent before their work was done.

Little more than two months of sure summer weather Cæsar had given himself for his campaign. He had been two weeks in Britain and was still upon the shore. And already from Labienus came news that Gaul was rumbling and muttering rebellion. But he marched on into Kent.

Those two weeks of respite had roused enemies against him. Still Segonax held his clan aloof in the Weald, but Lugotorix carried with him to Cassivellaunus envoys from the other kings of Kent and the news of the disaster to the Roman fleet followed them swift. Cassivellaunus saw the chance of his ambition come at last. He was gracious to the envoys. He would march to the rescue of the men of Kent, he would deliver them. He sent Lugotorix and the envoys back with orders to muster all the Kentish clans at Durovernum, and he called his vassals to arms and set out with a great host.

Cæsar left Atrius to guard the camp with the same ten cohorts. Again he marched by the ancient track to Durovernum. But

when he drew near the river he found that his task was to be harder. Swarms of chariots and horsemen broke out of the woods and harrassed the march. They could not break the legions with their missiles, they would not push a charge home. Where his cavalry came at them in strength they were driven back into the woods. But they were innumeraably many and swift and he lost men and time.

"These Britons have gathered strength, they grow bold," said Trebonius.

"Pray they grow bolder, my friend." Cæsar smiled.

"We have caught one who says, as the Gauls interpret him, a great king leads all Britain against us."

"If it be so, it is well. Who is this great king?"

"Cassi - Cassius Launus or some such thing. I cannot speak his barbarian name."

"Cassivellaunus," Volusenus said.

"So be it, wise man. You know the barbarians like your own kin."

“ This is he that was killing their other kings. We had a king’s son come to seek refuge with us in Gaul,” Cæsar said. “ I gave him a command in the cavalry.”

“ Mandubratius the Trinovant,” Volusenus said, “ Cassivellaunus slew his father.”

“ He is in my mind. Go to him, give him a company, let him ride to his tribe and say that Cæsar will deliver them from this Cassivellaunus and they shall have their own king again.” He smiled. “ We come to make men free, let it be known. Come my Trebonius, we will see if this great king stands against us on the river.” That was not the plan of Cassivellaunus. Neither on the river nor the hill above, where Lugotorix had held the fort, was their march stayed, but when they had gone some way further and halted for the night, when the legions had laid down their arms and were digging the camp, the British chariots and horsemen swept down upon them.

The cohorts posted on guard were

surrounded and hard pressed. Cæsar sent out two more cohorts to their aid. Around these also the chariots circled, and the charioteers sprang down and fought on foot wherever they had made disorder. They were so swift the heavy armed legionaries could not change ground fast enough to meet them with a front of shields but were assailed in flank and rear, and when laboriously the Britons were checked and outnumbered, their cavalry charged and their chariots drove in and bore them away. In this straggling fight the Romans lost many and it was hardly restored by the mass of the legions. The Britons drew off in the dusk shouting of victory.

On the next day Cæsar sent out to reap their fields a foraging party which was an army, three legions and all his cavalry and Trebonius had command. "Be ready always. Be wary and be bold," Cæsar said. "No king of the barbarians can let the corn of his tribes be taken while they look on. I give you a battle, Trebonius. Bring me victory."

Trebonius had learnt the lesson of the last campaign. When he came to the corn fields, he had patrols of cavalry out, he set some cohorts to work reaping and held the rest of the legions under arms.

But the men of Kent were not in a temper to let their fields be plundered. Cassivellaunus might have held off, the corn was none of his, he might not have chosen an open battlefield with the Romans drawn up for the onset, but the Kentish kings were challenging him to show his power and prove himself a leader, taunting him that he had not kept the Roman from their land. His own men, confident in the glory of the day before, clamoured for another victory. He gave the word.

From all sides the British host swept down upon the Romans, chariots and cavalry and footmen. The Roman patrols were driven in, the reaping parties dropped their corn and fled into the ranks of the legions and the cavalry fell back before the encircling onset. The Britons charged on, shouting war

songs and the names of their gods. But the legions stood fast. On that iron mass the wave of the charge broke and was shattered. The legions charged in their turn, but the Britons could not endure the volleys of javelins and fled before the short swords closed. Then Trebonius launched his cavalry upon them. They were chased far, they could not rally, the chariotmen found no moment to leap down and fight afoot and stay the rout. For behind the Roman horsemen the ranks of the legions followed close. And there was a great slaughter.

That night the host of Cassivellaunus melted away. The kings of Kent had no more hope in him. They led the remnants of their clans away into the Weald. Many of his vassals seized the chance of defeat to desert their lord. Even his own footmen slunk away homeward. He was left with little more than the chariots and the cavalry of his own tribe.

In the morning Cæsar marched on by the old track which, when the shrine of

a Christian saint rose at Durovernum, men were to call the Pilgrim's Way. He found no more battles to fight. Only some few of the British chariots watched the Roman line and, if a party was sent out to reap a corn field or drive off cattle, made a show of attack before they fled. In the evening the Romans came to the break in the downs by which the Medway winds through to the Thames and saw the mound of Kits Coty House and the city of the ford.

The legions halted, the officers rode on to choose a place for the camp. By the stones which circled the mound they saw one chariot waiting them. A woman stood in it alone, tall and stately, a golden band about her brow, a chain of gold across her broad bosom, gold on her bare arms. "I am Cartismandua, Queen of the city of the ford," she said, "bring me to Cæsar."

There was none of them who knew the language she spoke, but the name of Cæsar came clear and her calm dignity won respect.



"BRING ME TO CÆSAR."

“ It is some princess of the barbarians,” they said. “ Let her go to the bald man.”

So she came in her chariot to Cæsar where he sat on a bank talking with Volusenus and Trebonius. Her grave eyes singled him out and she lifted her hand in greeting. He smiled. “ Who is this goddess ? ” he said.

Volusenus looked her over. “ Some queen of the Britons. I do not know her clan. I think this blue-green tartan is none of those we have fought.”

She could not understand the Latin, but she read their minds. “ I am Cartismandua, Queen of the clan of the river, and the city of the ford. I give you peace, Cæsar.”

Volusenus put it into Latin. “ It is well,” the smile on the thin lips twisted. “ You ask peace having tried war in vain.” And Volusenus turned it into British speech.

“ My men have slain no man of yours nor yours of mine. My will has never been for war with you.”

“ The Queen is wise. What does the Queen ask of Cæsar ? ”

“ I bid you be the guests of my lands and of my city.”

“ Your city and your lands are mine for the taking.”

“ And my life too,” she said quietly. “ For I have put myself in your hands alone trusting the Roman faith. But if I had chosen, you had never seen me, you had found bare corn fields and empty pastures and a desolate city and my clan had followed you like wolves harrying your march. I do not choose it. My will is for peace.”

Volusenus began to put it into Latin, but before he had done, “ This woman is a queen,” Cæsar said softly. “ Say this to her. Cæsar spares those who trust him. Cæsar has honour for those who serve him with good will.”

“ There is friendship in my heart,” said Cartismandua. “ I bid you eat salt with me in my city to-night.”

Cæsar laughed and sprang up. “ I am the guest of Queen Cartismandua.”

But Trebonius plucked his sleeve. “ For

this she came. Never trust a barbarian who speaks fair. It is a trick, a trap, an ambush."

"To the crows with you," Cæsar swore in Greek. "This woman is all clean honour."

"Gods, will you risk all for a barbarian woman's smooth tongue?"

"Oh, little man, little man." Cæsar smiled. "What a puny life you live. Come, Volusenus, let us sup with the Queen. I wish to the gods I spoke her speech." He made a gracious gesture to Cartismandua and walked away beside her chariot. Volunsenus lingered a moment in quick talk with Trebonius. A cohort was called to arms and followed them down the hill. Some troops of cavalry mounted, and making a wide sweep on this side and that, made for the river.

"Cæsar is well guarded," Cartismandua said.

"Where is your king Cassivellaunus?" Volusenus said sharply.

"Cassivellaunus is no king of mine, Roman. He is fled beyond the river."

Cæsar took Volusenus by the arm. " You are not here to talk for yourself, my friend. What has she said ? "

" She says Cassivellaunus is no king of hers."

" That I believe." Cæsar smiled. " Pollux ! Have you fools turned out the army to watch me ? Say to her the Queen also perhaps has troublesome officers."

Volusenus translated it sulkily and Cæsar made a gesture of disdain at the troops behind and she smiled. " Even in Britain we have men who make wars for fear," she said.

When that also was translated, Cæsar made a queer face at Volusenus. " Is that blow for you or me ? A shrewd one ! ".

There was no sign of ambush at the city of the ford. Its men stood unarmed, staring and awed, in little companies among their women and the women and children chattered like starlings.

" Let your cursed cohort halt in the gate," Cæsar said and Volusenus shouted an order.

" Bid them come in if you will,"

Cartismandua turned. "I will send them meat and mead."

Volusenus laughed. "Give them bread, queen." The Roman legions reckoned meat no food for fighting men. "Mead and meat! You will feast to-night, Cæsar."

"My friend, it is you who are the barbarian," Cæsar said.

From all the huts in the city the clan and its slaves came crowding to see them go by. "We are a show," Volusenus grinned. "We march in the Queen's triumph. Will she have us killed behind her palace when she goes in to feast?" For that was the Roman way with the captives whom a general led in the procession of triumph for a victory.

They came to the wooden palace. She stepped down from her chariot. "Welcome Cæsar," she made a royal gesture.

"The Queen honours me," he said and she took his hand and led him in.

Brigit stood at the head of the women of the household, tall and still, and gazed at him with wide, wondering eyes. Cæsar,

who was looking curiously about the royal banqueting hall, at the thatch above and the straw underfoot and the low tables set in it and the bronze armour on the rough-hewn timber of the walls, became at last aware of her steady gaze. He surveyed her too :
“ This is worthy of a queen’s house.”

“ This is my daughter.”

“ It can be seen,” he smiled. “ You have done well. And she,” he took Brigit’s chin in his hand. “ A noble girl. Shall I find you a Roman husband ? ”

“ I need no man found for me.”

Volusenus chuckled as he translated it, but Cartismandua said quickly. “ As my mind sees, every Briton will be Roman soon.”

“ You see clear,” Cæsar turned to her. “ If the gods give me time, all the world shall learn in the school of Rome.”

She led him to a chair beside her own and Brigit brought him a silver cup of mead and wheaten cakes and salt. He tasted the drink and pledged the queen, he dipped the

bread in the salt and ate. Then the women came with smoking dishes of meat. That too he tasted, but only for courtesy. He made his meal of the bread, and while he ate talked eagerly of Britain and the British way of life, asking questions so fast that she could hardly find words to answer or Volusenus to translate. Yet he said nothing of war, it was all of the customs of the people, how they gained their livelihood, how they ordered their homes, what laws they had, what gods.

“Give me speech, Cæsar,” she said at last. “You have asked me many things. Answer me one. Why do you come to Britain? It was not for wealth, we are poor as you see, and Rome is rich. It was not to punish us, we have done you no wrong. Why do you come against us with your mighty fleets and armies?”

He smiled. “Why then, say it was to find out what manner of folk you are who dwell in this island cut off from all the world.”

She drew a deep breath. “I could almost believe it.”

“ You might be almost right.” He looked at her with grave eyes above his smiling lips. “ I would know all the things that are. Believe this also, Queen. I must establish the Roman peace and the Roman order, so that nowhere rest men untamed who can foster strife within the bounds of our Empire.”

“ You must set the world in order ! ”

“ I am Cæsar.”

“ I would pray the gods give you life, if I prayed to any god. But ours have no power.”

“ If I pass, Rome endures. Where the eagles have conquered, life runs into the Roman mould. Your people shall grow to inherit the gifts of Rome.”

“ Give us peace in the land and equal law. I have reigned many a year now and found nothing else of worth that power can give my people.”

“ The empire of Rome is peace.” He stood up. “ I might ask hostages of you. I might ask tribute. I am your friend, Cartismandua.”

She went to the wall, she took from it a bronze breastplate set with pearls. ““ This I give you. The King of my people must wear it when he goes forth to war. Now we are under your shield.”

Cæsar lifted the breastplate and held it high. “ This the gods of Rome shall guard for ever.”

And the records tell of only one treasure from Britain which Cæsar dedicated to the gods. It was a bronze breastplate set with pearls.

CHAPTER VI.

HEIRS OF ROME.

IN the morning the Roman army crossed the ford and marched on by the old track along the downs. The land below was tilled and much of it still golden with unreaped corn. Cæsar sent out his cavalry to forage. But Cassivellaunus had not given up the war. He had still chariots and some horsemen. He watched the Roman march and whenever the cavalry moved far from the legions, his chariots swept down upon them. Without the support of the solid ranks of the legionaries, the cavalry could not stand against an enemy which fought now with missiles, now on foot with sword and spear, and was yet swift enough to choose its own ground and its own moment for fighting, to be always in greater numbers where it attacked, to escape when it was charged in force.

The cavalry was so chastened that it dared not venture far from the legions. To get his corn Cæsar had to employ strong

parties of infantry. He gave orders to ravage the countryside, but though the angry legions burnt with good will what they could not reap and every village which they came upon went up in flames, the Britons would not be brought to battle.

Few prisoners were taken, few cattle. The men of Kent had fled into their woods or away to the west and the north. The chariots of Cassivellaunus still hovered about the Roman column and confined its ravaging to a narrow belt along the line of march.

“What is to gain, Cæsar?” Trebonius said at the end of a weary day. “The barbarians will not fight. We can march on till we fall off the other edge of their cursed island. But what shall we bring back?”

“Laurels, my Trebonius,” Cæsar smiled. “It shall be written that Trebonius marched with Cæsar to lead the eagles to the edge of the world.”

“Laurels!” Trebonius made a grimace. “I shall not pay my debts with laurels.”

“ Oh little man ! I have my debts too, Trebonius—— ”

“ So men say,” Trebonius chuckled.

“ You know not what you say. Rome has lent me power. I must pay her with victory. This great King Cassivellaunus has defied the Roman majesty. I must beat him down with such a blow that all his island shall hear and fear and obey the will of Rome. Go. We march at dawn.”

The lands of Cassivellaunus lay beyond the Thames and his city stood where the Romans long after built Verulamium, where St. Albans now is. He fell back upon the river and Cæsar turned northward from the downs and followed. It was plain to Cassivellaunus then that what he had gained by his ambition to be the master of Britain was to draw the weight of the Roman power upon him. His allies would do nothing for him in his need, his vassals fell away. The tribes which he had made his enemies were stirring against him. Mandubratius, the young prince of the Trinovantes whose father

he had slain, who had sought refuge with Cæsar, was back again calling them to arms against him and promising them the friendship of Rome. Still he was resolute to fight. Still he had hope and a plan.

On the banks of the Thames he gathered the fighting men of his tribe to hold the line of the river. He sent Lugotorix back into Kent to call its kings to arms again. With the legions out of their country they might be bold. Cassivellaunus asked of them an attack on the camp by the shore and the Roman fleet. If they had full success, Cæsar would be cut off from Gaul and must make peace to save himself from ruin. Though they failed, the threat to his fleet should make him hurry to the coast again and deliver Cassivellaunus from his onslaught.

Cæsar marched on to the Thames. From Mandubratius, eager that his enemy Cassivellaunus should be overthrown, came men of the Trinovantes to serve as guides. They brought news that Cassivellaunus had fortified the only safe ford of the river.

On the northern bank his clan was drawn up behind a palisade from which posts with sharp points thrust out over the water. In the bed of the river, hidden by the stream, was fixed row upon row of the like sharp, pointed stakes. Cæsar sent his cavalry to swim the deep water above the ford. While the Britons moved out of their defences to meet that threat, he gave the word for the legions to cross. Though they had to tread their way among the stakes, though the stream ran shoulder high, the legionaries came on so swiftly that they had strength to break the palisade on the bank with their first onset and the Britons, charged by the cavalry in flank, could not maintain the fight. They were cut down and chased till they scattered away.

Cæsar turned eastward and marched his army into the country of the Trinovantes, the corn lands which we call Essex. There for some little while his men had rest and plenty. But the halt was rather for policy than to refresh the weary army. The friends

of Rome as well as the enemies must see the power of the Roman legions. The men of Kent, the men of Cassivellaunus, had learnt how Rome dealt those who fought against her. The Trinovantes were to show how Rome served her friends. Not a field of theirs was ravaged, not a village plundered, and to Mandubratius their king were given royal honours.

The news travelled fast. Allies of Cassivellaunus made haste to be enrolled among the friends of Rome. One tribe after another, Cenimagni, Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci, Cassi, sent their envoys, promising peace, hostages, tribute, begging Cæsar to deliver them from the tyrant Cassivellaunus, offering eagerly help in his destruction.

“These barbarians are all curs,” said Trebonius. “They would desert their fathers and their sons to escape from defeat.”

“All men do what profits them,” Volusenus shrugged. “It profits you to be loyal.”

Cæsar smiled. “I think more nobly of

man. I know men who would be loyal in the last danger." He laid his hand on Volusenus's shoulder.

"Ay, Cæsar. We are Romans," Trebonius cried, and Trebonius was to be one of those who murdered him.

"Some of us are loyal," Volusenus said. "Having this in our hearts, that a man can fare no better than to be with Cæsar. But I do not blame a poor beast of a barbarian whose loyalty is to his own stomach."

"We teach them loyalty," Cæsar smiled. "They shall find a man does well who is faithful to Rome. Therefore I sent them Mandubratius. It has served. Now they have forsaken this great king of theirs and he is alone. Let us go beat him down and the Britons have learnt their lesson."

Cassivellaunus stood at bay in his city, gathering there his people and his cattle, for he had no other refuge since all his allies had deserted him. It was hidden in wood and marsh. But Cæsar had no lack of guides who knew all its secrets. It was

defended by a ditch and a strong rampart. But the archers and slingers of the Roman army scourged its defences with arrows and stones and when the Britons shrank down from the hail of the missiles the legions made an assault on two sides at once and stormed in. Many of the Britons were cut down, many more captured, but with a remnant Cassivellaunus fled away and escaped into the woods. The cattle of the clan, his city, his treasure and a host of slaves were the Roman booty.

But that night there came to Cæsar horsemen from the coast bringing news of danger in Gaul. Labienus wrote that the tribes were grown restive and hard to drive and from all the country came rumours of a great plot of rebellion. The storm would surely break soon and if it broke while Cæsar and his legions were still in Britain he counted Gaul lost.

Cæsar read it with a tranquil brow. He made his camp and fed his army on the fields of Cassivellaunus. His cavalry ravaged

the country far and wide. He let it be known among the Britons that he waited the submission of the defeated king. And each day his horsemen bringing in corn and cattle and captives left Cassivellaunus in worse plight. But day followed day and Cassivellaunus gave no sign.

Cæsar held his ground with all the parade of a confident, ruthless conqueror. To the British chiefs who flocked to his camp suing for his favour he was imperious. He levied upon them, he ordered their affairs, he laid down policies for them. No man, not even his own officers, guessed that he was risking the fate of Gaul and the power of Rome.

But at last Cassivellaunus spoke. Commius the Gaul brought into camp envoys of his who were ready to promise all things if the great king could have deliverance from the Roman arms. Cæsar was in no haste. He must have hostages, many hostages, and till they were surrendered, his army would live on the land of

Cassivellaunus. He must have tribute. And on peril of death to the hostages, Cassivellaunus should do no hurt to the Trinovantes nor any of the allies of Rome nor march beyond his own bounds.

All this, as quickly as the envoys could go and come, the great king yielded. He sent the hostages, his own kin, the chief men of his tribe. He swore to keep the Roman peace. "Now go your ways," he said sullenly to Commius. "I pray the gods I may never see a Roman again."

"Other men have prayed that in vain," said Commius. The time was come when he would rebel against Rome and make that same prayer. Cassivellaunus strode away with his head sunk on stooping shoulders.

"There is a broken man," Trebonius chuckled.

"Peace. He knows it." Cæsar watched him. "He was slow to learn. But he learnt swift at last. What quickened him?"

"Hope goes suddenly, Cæsar," Commius said.

“ It is true. Yet what destroyed his hope ? ”

On the way to the coast they learnt. News came of an attack of the men of Kent on the camp and fleet which had failed. But at that news Cæsar pressed on by forced marches. He knew that he had come even nearer the edge of ruin than was in his cool bold reckoning. He would not risk one hour more in Britain than he must.

When Lugotorix drove his chariot into Kent, he found the clans still lurking in the Weald. They were in surly humour. Each king, each clan had lost too much to be friendly with the others, each was sure that the others had come off better and not done their share of the fighting. But Segonax had recovered something of his old influence. He and his, it was not to be denied, had fought first and alone. He had given warning that Cassivellaunus would lead them to nothing but disaster. A crafty old rogue he was for certain, but a good man to follow in dangerous days.

So Lugotorix coming first to King Cingetorix found that he would undertake nothing alone and was kept chafing while messengers summoned Segonax and the other kings to council.

Segonax came last with Cunoval and some of the chief men of his clan. "My good brother!" he grinned. "What news of the great King Cassivellaunus?"

"Cassivellaunus upholds the war, Segonax. Cassivellaunus fights on."

"Where?" Segonax grunted.

"He has Cæsar at grips along the Thames. The Romans can neither advance nor retreat. Cassivellaunus guards the river bank so boldly they cannot force a crossing. They are committed to the battle and tangled in the thickets and the marshes, they cannot break away. Now is our hour to strike bold and destroy them."

"How?" Segonax grunted.

"I bring you this word from Cassivellaunus. If you would be delivered from the Roman thieves, now fall upon their

ships with all your strength. Thus says Cassivellaunus: 'I hold Cæsar and his legions far away from the shore. Let the men of Kent do their part. It is but a few hundred Roman swords that guard the fleet. They cannot stand against you. Beat them down and burn the ships. Then is Cæsar taken in a trap and no man of his legions shall see Roman again. So Britain is free for ever.' "

One of the kings swore by the gods that Cassivellaunus was bold and another cried out it was a brave plan and some of their men shouted death to the Romans. But Segonax sat silent pulling his lip and the other kings began to look at him.

"What say you, Segonax?" one said.

"Who, I? What should I say? You have had your orders from the great King Cassivellaunus. Fear and obey."

Then one swore that he was not the slave of Cassivellaunus, and Lugotorix said fiercely.

"My brother would be the slave of Rome."

"No man's slave, I," said Segonax. "I

have my own mind. Will you hear it then ? Thus says Segonax : ‘ If we attack the Roman camp we shall deliver Cassivellaunus from Cæsar, for Cæsar will come back to fall upon us. It is a bold plan, a wise plan—for the great King Cassivellaunus.’ ”

“ By the boar ! ” Lugotorix cried. “ This is a woman speaks.”

“ No, brother, a king,” Segonax smiled.

“ It is the voice of a woman—the woman Cartismandua, who has betrayed us all to make her peace with Cæsar.”

“ Who brought her clan to fight with me in the first battle when I had no other help. We have done our part, her clan and mine. I do no more.”

Then one of the kings said Segonax was right, but another asked if they were to live all their lives hiding in the woods and they wrangled in many words. But Lugotorix won upon them with loud assurance that the chance to recover cities and lands lay ready to their grasp, with promises of the plunder to be won in the Roman camp, with taunts

of cowardice. At last they were brought to agree the assault should be tried. They would not march together with all their strength, for Segonax refused utterly and the others would not risk their clans while he stood aloof, but each would furnish those of their fighting men who had heart for it.

“ Who shall lead them ? ” said Cingetorix.

“ Let him lead this wise venture who has faith in it,” Segonax grinned. “ There is none but my good brother.”

The kings took that ill, which was his intention. But since none of them desired to run the risk, they allowed sullenly Lugotorix should have command.

“ By the boar ! I will bear your burden,” Lugotorix said. “ The men of Kent shall know there is one of my blood no coward.” He looked at Segonax and laughed.

Cunoval started up. “ No man dares what the son of Segonax will not dare,” he cried. “ Lead your battle boldly, Lugotorix, I will be before you.”

Then the kings cried out that it was well

said and Lugotorix smiling promised him the van of the battle and they fell to counting men.

But Segonax walked apart. To him came Cunoval. "Give me leave, my father. I could do no other."

"No. No. It was well done. Choose the best of our men. Choose well. Guard yourself, Cunoval. He is crafty, my good brother. You are not your own. You are the life of the clan."

That night Cunoval drove his chariot to the city of the ford. There the threshing floors were busy; the cattle were in the yards, and the cheese presses groaning; there the women sat spinning and the children played about the huts.

Cartismandua came from her granary to bid him welcome. "You should not leave us so long without you, Cunoval."

"It is good here," he looked about him.

"What we have is yours."

"I cannot be here while my clan is homeless."

“ You will be back in Durovernum soon.”

“ There is no peace for us yet.”

Brigit came flushed and smiling. “ What news of the lord Cunoval ? I heard he had cast us off.”

Cunoval took her hands. “ So it is. I am grown so great and rich and fortunate I will have none of you.”

“ This is good news. For I am to marry Cæsar.”

He dropped her hand. “ Good news, by the boar ! ” he cried. “ I shall have the more pleasure to kill him.”

“ Come in, come in,” said Cartismandua quickly. “ Oh, my children; ” she had an arm round each, “ these jests have too sharp an edge. You have news, Cunoval. Tell us.”

“ We do battle with the Romans again. To-morrow we march against their camp.”

Brigit put her hand to her throat. “ This—this is from Segonax ? ” Cartismandua looked at him with troubled eyes.

“ My father has no faith in it. But

Lugotorix challenged him." And he told them of the debate in the council of kings.

"Ah, Lugotorix!" Cartismandua said fiercely. "That man has black blood in his heart."

"Cunoval!" Brigit cried, "Do not follow him. He is false."

"Follow! Not I. By the boar, I shall be on the Roman swords before Lugotorix."

"You must not," she caught at him.

"You say so!" he scowled. "Let me be, girl. If I flinch now, I have no honour."

"Cunoval!"

He took her in his arms and held her for a moment and dashed away.

In the dawn of the second day after, Lugotorix led his band out of the woods and they rushed at the Roman camp. He and some few of the nobly born were in chariots, the rest afoot. A light mist lay along the coast, they were not seen till they drew near. The men of the cohort on guard were struck by a storm of spears and stones as they gave the alarm. The Britons came on boldly and

surged up the rampart and made good a footing on the summit, for to reach round the great circuit of the camp, the line of the cohort was stretched thin.

“Stand to it, stand to it yet,” Brannus shouted. “Hold fast. Our brothers are with us.”

Reinforcements came up fast. The weight of another cohort cleared the ramparts. Archers and slingers shot at the crowded Britons below. From the main gate Quintus Atrius launched a sally of a thousand men to take them in flank. Over the rampart Brannus led his men in a charge at their front.

The Britons were born back in straggling disorder. He saw Cunoval fighting wildly, heard him shout for the chariots to come to their aid. “Gods! Have they sent the boy to lead?” he muttered and dashed the sweat out of his eyes and stood back to survey the battle.

The chariots hovered about the rear of the Britons, picking up a man here, a man there

and drawing off. "Lugotorix!" Cunoval shouted. "Lugotorix! Drive in upon the wolves. Strike! Strike!"

But Lugotorix turned his horses and drove away.

"By Hercules, I know you now," Brannus muttered. He called to the archers where they shot dropping shafts on the melee. "Mark him there in the first chariot. Bring him down," and a flight of arrows sped after Lugotorix and he fell from his chariot and his horses galloped away. And Brannus thrust swearing into the fight again. He heard Cunoval's voice no more, he could not see the boy. "Break them, break them, over and through," he roared and then in the British speech, "Yield Britons, yield. Your lord is fled and dead."

The Britons were swept back, broken, scattered. "Form your ranks, stand close." Brannus shouted and a trumpet sounded and the Legionaries checked and formed again.

Atrius had no notion of loosing his men

on a wild pursuit. He halted the cohorts, he sent his cavalry out to sweep the open country and bring in captives.

"You have done well, my Brannus. You have done enough. These dogs will not come at our fold again."

Brannus saluted. "I believe not. Their leader is down. It is he who was the flame of war in Kent, Lugotorix."

"A noble leader?"

"Noble?" Brannus made a grimace. "He was a King's son, he stirred them to battle. He was first in flight. There he lies. I turned the archers upon him."

"You have done well. Let me see the barbarian."

They found Lugotorix with the shafts of arrows in his shoulder and his side. "Do you live?" Atrius said coldly. "It is well. You shall walk in Cæsar's triumph."

Brannus grinned: and in the British speech he said: "By the boar! You have earned that, Lugotorix."

"Dog of a Roman!" Lugotorix groaned.

The British captives were set to bury their dead. Brannus walked among the bodies where they lay thick and found Cunoval at last covered with dust and blood. He looked long. He strode away to the herded captives and picked out two who wore the tartan of the clan of Durovernum. "You serve Prince Cunoval?" They looked at him like beaten dogs. "We are his men," one said.

"You live and your lord is dead."

"Give us death, Roman."

"It is your due. Follow me." He led them to Cunoval's body. "Look upon him. Is that your Prince." They looked, they flung themselves down in the dust by the body and kissed its hands and its feet. Then they started up and stared at Brannus. "Bear him away," Brannus said. "He shall not lie in the common grave. He was a king's son." And they gathered Cunoval in their arms and he led them to a green slope under the woods. "Do him honour." He bent and laid his hand a moment on the boy's head and strode away.

A little while after one of his men ran to him : " Centurion, those two Britons—" he pointed—" they are fled into the woods, they carry off the body."

" The dogs ! " Brannus chuckled. " By Pollux, it is no matter. We have Britons enough, dead and alive."

On the next day Segonax came to the city of the ford and Cartismandua and Brigit met him in the gate. He held out his arms wide, he let them fall.

" Cunoval ! " Brigit cried.

" He fought for my honour and he is dead. And I live to tell of it."

Brigit covered her face. Cartismandua put an arm about her. " Come, my cousin," she said. " Our house is for you in this darkness."

" There is no house for me above the ground. I am here to tell my shame. Then I go to lead my people against the Romans and have my vengeance and die."

" Come," she said. " Tell us all. We have our right to that, Segonax."

She led him to her palace and there he told the tale of the fight as the fugitives had borne the news, cursing Lugotorix, cursing himself and his policies. But while he talked, a woman ran in crying, "Lady, lady, they bring my lord Cunoval to you."

To the palace door came a chariot and men of the clan of Durovernum lifted out Cunoval helpless, filthy and blood stained, but his pale lips moved and he muttered and groaned.

Segonax clutched at him shouting his name. "Oh peace, peace, now." Cartismandua said. "Give him to us. He is ours." She called to her women and they bore him in and his weary eyes saw Brigit and his hand reached out to her.

There came a day when he heard trumpets and the tramp of an army and asked eagerly what it was.

"Be still, child," Brigit smiled. "There is no work for you. The Romans are marching to the coast again. They do not halt here. My mother offered them a camp and

corn. But Cæsar is in haste to find his ships. Your lordship has made the poor Romans fear."

"Curse the Romans," Cunoval muttered.

"I do not curse them all," said Brigit. "There is one, Brannus, who is no enemy of mine."

"You women think he meant to set me free," Cunoval frowned.

"It is so, boy. We women know he saved you. We think he liked you well. Is it not strange of him?"

So the legions passed by the city of the ford and marched on to the coast. There Cæsar found new alarms from Gaul waiting him which quickened his haste. So many ships had been lost in the storm, he had taken so many prisoners to sell in the slave markets, that the fleet could not carry all the host in one voyage. He sent one part across. He spent some anxious days and nights, for the gales of the Equinox were near, waiting the return of the ships. The seas were stormy and many could not make the British

shore again, but by crowding every hull to the utmost, he had the last of his legions aboard and sailed away to meet the danger in Gaul.

Segonax came smiling to Cunoval's bedside. "The Romans are gone, my son. We have seen the last of them. By the boar! they have gained so little of our Britain, I think it will be long before we see them again," he grinned. "They have Lugotorix indeed. I wish them joy of my good brother. For the rest—they have done us some hurt, we have shed some blood of theirs. And that is the end of all their striving."

"So a man might say of many a war," said Cartismandua.

"They say Rome never goes back. She has gone back now," Segonax chuckled.

"I cannot tell that," Cartismandua said.

"What, you see the legions coming on us again?"

"I do not say so. But nothing now is the same with us as they found it. Cæsar

has beaten down Cassivellaunus. We fear him no more, nor any tyrant king. We have learnt the power of Rome. We have seen what she makes of her men. The old gods are dead. It is in my mind we shall look to Rome and come to live in the Roman way."

"Not in my time," Segonax shook his head. "My ways are good enough for me."

"Not in our time," she smiled. "We are old." She laid her hand on Brigit's, "But in theirs perhaps. Their children's children will be the heirs of Rome."

